

AN HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL VIEW  
OF THE  
SPECULATIVE PHILOSOPHY OF EUROPE  
IN THE  
NINETEENTH CENTURY.

BY  
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VOLUME I.

SECOND EDITION, REVISED AND ENLARGED.

LONDON:  
JOHN JOHNSTONE, 26 PATERNOSTER ROW;  
AND 15 PRINCES STREET, EDINBURGH.

MDCCCXLVII.

pursued the study of mind. Suppose, for example, that the illustrious astronomer of the same age, had investigated the architecture of the heavens on the same principle as Locke did the construction and powers of the human understanding; suppose that, instead of commencing with a distinct knowledge of the phenomena of the heavens, he had first applied all his energies to search into the *origin* of those which present themselves confusedly and in the aggregate to the mind of any ordinary observer, what, we ask, would have been the result? He must, in that case, necessarily have formed hypotheses unwarranted, or, at least, unproved by facts; and, instead of casting a lustre upon his name, his age, and his country, would have, probably, taken his rank amongst those ingenious speculators who had before him beaten the path to oblivion. The method which Newton followed taught him to reject all previous hypotheses as so many obstacles in the path of true science; it taught him, before he sought the origin of any phenomena, to examine what they really were, what characteristics they bore, and how many of a similar nature might be ranged side by side to throw light upon each other. He knew that, to neglect *one* fact, or to imagine *one*, were both fatal errors in inductive science, which might lead us in the end far away from the truth.

Precisely of this nature, however, was Locke's first deviation from the true Baconian principles. In commencing by seeking for the *origin* of our



ideas, he was actually investigating the source of phenomena, of which he had not yet determined either the character or the number, investigating them, moreover, as is almost inevitable in such cases, under the influence of several false hypotheses. The result was, that his conclusion upon this question was necessarily *a guess* ; or, if we would name it philosophically, an hypothesis which *might* be true or might not. Instead of classifying all our ideas as they exist in their present mature condition in the mind, and then drawing from such an extensive and complete view of the case, a valid conclusion as to their primitive state or origin, he drew his inference before he had examined his data, and thus made the observations square to the theory, instead of drawing the theory from his observations. To lay a firm basis for mental science by such a method, was and ever must be absolutely impossible ; for, when once we have an hypothesis ready formed, we soon become too prejudiced in its favour to judge impartially of any facts which may seem to militate against it ; and, even, if all the facts we may happen to observe do agree with it, yet, until we have made a systematic induction of them *all*, and brought them one by one to the proper test, it is impossible to regard our position as proved beyond the danger of being overturned by some hitherto unheeded phenomenon. But it is not an *uncertain* position which will do for the cornerstone of a whole system of philosophy.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As this point of the criticism on Locke has been strongly con-

Having thus pointed out the error which Locke appears at the outset to have fallen into in the method of conducting his examination, we may now proceed to a criticism of the different portions of his work, and show in what manner this first aberration led him into subsequent confusion. As, however, the whole of the former part of the Essay is occupied in discussing the question of the origin of our ideas, we must make a few remarks on this expression, to pave the way for a better comprehension of Locke's whole theory. The term *origin* may be taken in two senses, essentially different from each other. It may mean the *cause*

tested by a late reviewer (see Prospective Review, Nov. 1846,) I shall add one or two further illustrations of it. The reviewer affirms that Locke *did* understand the true method of philosophical research; that he stated his thesis first, and brought up his facts afterwards; that the case of Newton is an "unfortunate" one, as *he* started with *no* induction of facts, but simply with the two laws of Kepler; and, finally, that Locke assumed *no* data but sensation and reflection. Let us briefly examine these four points.

That Locke was imbued with the general spirit of the Baconian Methodology I have admitted, and even affirmed—that he saw its *full* application to the investigation of mind, I cannot allow. What was Bacon's method? First, to make a Natural History of Facts; next to classify those facts; thirdly, to investigate their relative weight and significancy; and then, lastly, to rise through the several stages of generalisation to the highest law of the phenomena in question. In Locke we have, it is true, many psychological facts scattered through his Essay; but this certainly cannot be called a *systematic arrangement* of the phenomena of consciousness, nor would any one, who proceeded upon the strictly inductive method, make the whole of the facts adduced, from the very first, cluster around a theory as Locke did. He would rather repress this tendency to "anticipate nature" until the facts were better known. But, says the reviewer, may not a man state his thesis *first*, and *then* bring up his facts to bear

of anything being produced, or it may imply simply the *occasion* of its production. Between the real cause, and the occasion of any phenomenon, there is a wide diversity. The one implies a *producing power*, the other only some *condition* upon which this power comes into exercise. If I cast a grain of corn into the earth, the occasion of its springing up and producing plant, ear, and grain, is the warmth and moisture of the soil in which it is buried; but this is by no means the cause. The cause lies in the mysterious vital power which the seed contains within itself; the other is but the condition upon which this cause produces the effect. I am aware

upon it? Certainly he may; but the question is, *did Locke do this?* Far from it. Respecting no book, perhaps, could such a remark be more "unfortunate." Locke did not begin to write *after* he had well digested the subject; so that he could lay down his mature conclusion at the beginning as a thesis, and then systematically support it. Locke *wrote*, in order to *learn*. He philosophised as the book went on. For eighteen years he was writing upon it, and there are evident indications of his views wavering and sometimes changing as the work proceeded. He was no reader of the History of Philosophy; his Essay, in fact, contains simply the process of his own philosophic development. Can it be said of such a book that the conclusion of the whole, the thesis in which it was all to result, could be laid down first, *the facts having been already well arranged and scrutinised?* Impossible. Locke began to *philosophise*, not simply to *write* with a certain theory; and that theory coloured the facts he adduced throughout the whole work.

Again, let us look at the case of Newton. The reviewer affirms that Newton began with no systematic view of the facts of astronomy, but simply with Kepler's two laws. Now let it be remembered, that from the age of Ptolemy most diligent observations had been going on from time to time of the phenomena of the heavens. Any one acquainted with the history of astronomy knows, that the number of observations taken by the astronomers of the age of Kepler was prodigious.

that a sensationalist, who rejects the idea of power, would repudiate this distinction, and regard all effects similar to that above described, as being brought about by a composition of causes. We still maintain, however, that in the majority of instances a valid ground for the distinction is manifest, and that the power by which an event is brought into being is clearly separable from the conditions under which that power is put forth.<sup>1</sup> When we speak, therefore, of the origin of our ideas, we must ever take heed to avoid the ambiguity which lurks in the term. The cause of any idea is the inward faculty from which it *imme-*

gious ; that it was by means of these observations that the science advanced ; and that, without them, Kepler's laws would never have been established. Newton came *by inheritance* into all these observations ; the very knowledge of Kepler's laws really involved them. He began his own investigations, therefore, not only with a distinct idea of the actual phenomena of the case ; but, what is more, with certain deductions from those phenomena already established and verified. To say that Newton conducted his investigations independently of a most wide and patient colligation of facts as the basis, I cannot but think, involves a total oversight of the real foundation upon which the Newtonian system rests. To be further assured how patiently the great philosopher *observed* before he reasoned, we have only to trace his discoveries in those subjects where he could not fall back upon a mass of *previous* observations, and we find that the colligation of facts, even by his extraordinarily sagacious mind, was most laboriously carried on before he ventured to theorise or to *deduce*. No one, assuredly, can maintain that Locke grounded his "thesis" of the nature of the human understanding, which stands *at the outset of his philosophy*, upon a survey of the facts of consciousness at all comparable to the survey which Newton *inherited* of the phenomena of the heavens. Finally,

<sup>1</sup> The real existence of a *nisus* or effort in every effect beyond the mere visible antecedents, will be illustrated hereafter.

*diately* takes its rise; and this is in the proper, and in the only proper sense, its true origin. But man, we know, is a unity; the different powers and faculties of his mind all coexist in one subject, and develop themselves simultaneously, working and interworking together throughout all their operations. It so happens, therefore, that the action of one faculty often depends upon another, and only comes into play when thus stimulated. Hence the ideas which owe their origin, properly so called, to one of these faculties, may owe their occasion to another; in which case great care is requisite to separate that faculty which gives rise to them *directly*, from those which have to do only indirectly with their production. Thus, to give an

the reviewer affirms, that Locke assumed no data beside sensation and reflection. We reply, that he *assumed* quite gratuitously his whole theory of ideas as representations of outward reality. This theory, as Dr Reid has shown, lay at the very basis of his philosophy, and, so far from leaving the path of psychological discovery clear, presented obstacles to it at every step. Had Newton adopted the Ptolemaic theory of the heavens as a recognised fact, it is needless to say how it must have stood in the way of all advancement. Of a similar nature was the obstruction which the ideal system actually presented in the philosophical speculations of Locke. Added to this, he was encumbered, perhaps almost unconsciously, with the notion of animal spirits as being the agents in sensation, and with the doctrine of impact as being the only method by which one object can affect another. Of the justice, then, of the original criticism, I still feel perfectly convinced—at any rate, to prove its incorrectness demands a view of the question very different from the plausible, but as it seems to me “loose,” strain of remark I have commented upon. In truth, what we want, to the present day, is a faithful psychology strictly inductive, and unencumbered with any hypothesis. On this subject see Jouffroy on the Method of Philosophical Study, prefixed to his translation of Stewart’s “*Outlines of Moral Philosophy*.”

example, we should attribute the abstract conception of space *directly* to the operation of our reason ; while yet we regard sensation, or an actual contact with the material world, as absolutely necessary in order to incite the rational faculty to the formation of such a conception.<sup>1</sup>

Now, this obvious distinction Locke appears to have entirely overlooked. Where he found a difficulty in showing the direct dependence of any idea upon experience, he soon discovered the means of showing its indirect dependence upon it, and having done this, he incorrectly concluded, that the whole of our knowledge could be derived from this one source. We owe it mainly to Kant, that this fallacy has been thoroughly probed and refuted. In the very first paragraph of his great work ("The Critick of Pure Reason") he points us to experience as the *occasion* of every possible conception which the mind forms ; but proves afterwards most convincingly, that the true cause of many of our conceptions is to be found solely in the original constitution of the understanding or of the reason. This distinction, then, premised, we may proceed to consider the sentiments which are advanced in the first book of the "Essay on the Human Understanding."

Before Locke proceeded to the analysis of *ideas*, properly so called, there was a prior question which seemed to claim some consideration ; namely,

See some excellent remarks upon this point in Stewart's "Philosophy of the Human Mind," chap. i. sec. 4. See also his "Philosophical Essays," Essay I. chap. ii.

whether those first principles, or axioms, which are universally granted, which are regarded as undemonstrable, and from which all reasoning originally proceeds, are not to be considered as strictly *innate*. Should these first truths really turn out to be so, it is clear that they would seriously militate against Locke's whole theory; and therefore it was necessary to clear them out of the way, before he proceeded to prove generally the empirical origin of our *ideas*. And what course does he take to accomplish this purpose? He adduces a number of these first truths *in their abstract axiomatic form*, and then undertakes to prove with considerable success, that they are neither universally held nor even universally comprehended.<sup>1</sup> Since, however, he had not only to disprove their universality as elements of human knowledge, but was bound also to account for their origin on some positive principle, here arose a formidable difficulty, which he was obliged to encounter. To make absolute and self-evident propositions, such *e. g.* as that a whole is greater than a part, or that it is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be, merely experimental and factitious in their nature, appeared absurd; at any rate, to show the method by which they *could* come simply through the aid of experience, without being involved in the natural constitution of the intellect, was in the highest degree difficult; the only resource left was to take shelter behind a species of nominalism, and to declare the

<sup>1</sup> See Essay, chap. ii. throughout.

most obvious of such propositions to be *verbal* abstractions, which might be employed for convenience, but which could be of no utility in aiding the discovery of any truth. "These general maxims," he says, "are of great use in disputes, to stop the mouths of wranglers, but not of much use to the discovery of unknown truths, or to help the mind forward in its search after knowledge." And again—"As to other less general maxims, they are no more than bare verbal propositions, and teach us nothing but the respect and import of names one to another."<sup>1</sup>

Now, in this theory of maxims, or first principles, whether speculative or practical, there is a manifest misapprehension of their real force and character, which we may show both from the arguments by which he attempts to prove their non-universality, and also from the considerations, by which he endeavours to prove their practical inutility. In taking up the first or negative argument, Locke selects, as we have seen, some examples, and lays them before us in a definite verbal form; then having shown that such axioms would be unintelligible to a child or a savage, he infers that they are not innate, nay, that their very terms themselves have to be empirically acquired before they can be duly appreciated.<sup>2</sup> No doubt this is perfectly correct on the supposition, that a first truth necessarily means *something expressed or conceived in*

<sup>1</sup> See Essay, Book IV. chap. vii. sec. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. chap. ii. sec. 5. See also chap. iii. sec. 19.



*formal, logical language.* In this sense there can be no maxim innate, because in *nature* there are given neither propositions ready formed, nor even words by which we may form them. But while no principle is implanted in us by nature, in its complete logical form, yet there may be many *virtually* implied and included in the necessary laws by which our judgments are governed, and our thoughts develop themselves. Ask a savage whether every effect must have a sufficient cause, and he would smile unintelligently at the question ; and yet that untutored mind is so constructed, that it acts necessarily upon the very principle, which, clothed in an artificial and verbal dress, it was unable to comprehend. Ask a child whether a whole is greater than a part, or whether the same thing can at the same time be and not be, and, as Locke truly says, he would not very likely comprehend the very terms of the question ; but let him be brought into a position in which he has to pass such a judgment *in its concrete form*, and you find that his mind comprehends the full force of the axiom, and acts upon it as necessarily as we do. Certain, then, as it may be, that these first truths are unintelligible to the infant or untutored mind, yet, strip them of their abstract dress, and you will find that every mind contains, in its primitive judgments, nay, possesses, as the very law of its activity, the germ of these very axioms which the more cultivated intellect learns but to develop and to express.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Leibnitz's "Nouveaux Essais sur l'Entendement Humain,"

Again, with regard to the other ground which Locke takes up, when he denies the real value of axioms, and affirms them to be of no avail in our search after knowledge ; here, also, there is the same misapprehension of their real nature. That we are unable to draw truth *directly* from such first principles we allow ; but that is far from proving them to be worthless. So far, indeed, from that, it may be easily seen, that they lie at the very foundation of all our reasoning, so that without their existence *in the mind* no argument would be possible. Locke affirms, in opposition to this, that mathematicians, who make the most use of axioms, employ them more for convenience or custom than utility ; and we are quite ready to grant that they do so, as far as the *verbal expression* of them goes. But let any one try to reason one single step without having them in the mind, and taking their truth for granted, and it will soon be seen that they are the necessary condition of every demonstration that we employ. *Nature gives us nothing in the abstract*, and therefore, in this sense, neither axioms nor ideas can be innate ; but she gives us that mental constitution, and impresses upon us those laws of thought, which necessarily involve such first axiomatic truths, and which lead every mind to form them inwardly for itself as soon as it comes into contact with the world without.<sup>1</sup> Our conclusion, then, respecting

Book I., where the arguments of Locke upon the question of moral and speculative principles are vigorously refuted.

<sup>1</sup> See Cousin's " Histoire de la Phil." Leçon 24.

the whole question of first principles, speculative and practical, is this, that although in their abstract form they are not innate, yet that there are *innate faculties*, or laws of thought which, when put into action by experience, necessarily give rise to them as primitive judgments; and that these judgments, at first applied in the concrete, at length, by a process of abstraction, assume a perfect axiomatic form. Experience, accordingly, is the *occasion* of their production, but their *real cause* or origin is to be found in the native energy of the human mind.

The doctrine of principles being disposed of in the first book of his Essay, Locke proceeds in the second to develop his theory respecting the origin of *our ideas*. The supposition of our ideas being innate, he rejects primarily on this ground, that if it can be shown (which he believes to be quite possible) that we have faculties capable of forming them, there is no reason to regard them as originally implanted.<sup>1</sup> So far Locke is undoubtedly correct, and has shown satisfactorily that our natural faculties are sufficient to account for every notion we possess, without our having recourse to the fiction of innate ideas. But then mark the process of reasoning, which he institutes from this point. Let it be allowed, that every idea is the result of our natural faculties; from what, then, he asks, does the action of these faculties take its rise? Manifestly from experience. Therefore, he concludes, experience must be the primary source of all

<sup>1</sup> See Essay, chap. ii. sec. 1.

our ideas. This it was which induced Locke to make use of the illustration, that compares the mind to white paper, which is void of all characters until the hand of experience inscribe them.

Now here, again, we may observe the error into which Locke was led by confounding the *cause* of our ideas with their *occasion*. There can be no idea, he argues, prior to experience;—granted. *Therefore*, he concludes, the mind previous to it is, as it were, a “*tabula rasa*,” oving every notion, which it gains, primarily to an empirical source. Granted still—if all that is meant be simply, that experience is the *occasion* or *condition* of acquiring our ideas; but if it be intended that this is in every case their proper origin, we at once demur. The mind comes into existence, if indeed void of actual ideas, yet by no means destitute of the forms or categories, both of sensation and intellection, that is, in other words, of intellectual laws and principles; and it is to these that we attribute the direct *origin* of all the pure conceptions of reason, although it might have been experience, which *occasioned* the formation of them.<sup>1</sup> The spirit of man, just like the seed, to which I before referred, has its inherent energy within itself. The grain of wheat has in it, *potentially*, the ear that is to wave in the next summer’s sun, and the acorn, in its little

<sup>1</sup> See Kant’s “Critick of Pure Reason, Transcendental, Æsthetic, Analytic,” in which the *a priori* element is throughout separated from the Empirical, and all experience shown to arise from the synthesis of the two.

circumference, incloses the oak that is to bear the blast of ages ; in the same manner, does the mind at birth contain potentially all the elements of the future man, neither more nor less. But as the seed must come in contact with the soil to call its hidden powers into development, so must the mind come into contact with the world of experience, in order that its energies may unfold themselves, and produce their own proper fruits.<sup>1</sup>

Having broadly laid down the principle, that all the materials of our knowledge come from experience, Locke goes on to explain his theory more particularly. Observation, he shows, may be external or internal, that is, it may have reference to the visible world, or to our own mental operations. The former kind of observation is called *sensation*, the latter *reflection*. These two, then, sensation and reflection, are the sources of all our ideas, and it was for the sake of proving and illustrating this position that the greater portion (that is, the second book) of the Essay was written. Now, in estimating this theory of the origin of our ideas, it is of great importance to know exactly what is included

<sup>1</sup> Sensationalists have attempted to contravene this view, by the supposition that the understanding grows up into the possession of its powers, just as the human body consolidates. They forget that as, without the process of assimilation, the consolidation of the body could never take place, so without the native construction of the intellectual faculty its powers could never develop. That native construction involves all we contend for—it contains the subjective elements of experience, *i. e.* it contains all those ground-forms of the understanding, by which knowledge from experience can be assimilated, and made valid to the human mind.

in the two terms sensation and reflection, and to attribute to them neither more nor less than the author intended. With regard to the first, we can have but little difficulty in perceiving, that he included under it simply that state of passive receptivity in which the mind exists, when brought, by means of the senses, into contact with the material world. In making reflection a source of ideas co-ordinate with sensation, he renders quite obvious the distinction between the *passive* and the *active* faculties of man, and clearly avoids the extreme into which so many of his followers have run, in regarding sensation as the foundation principle of all our mental operations. If, then, there be any doubt at all in determining the precise meaning of the theory now before us, it must all rest in the acceptation of the term *reflection*.<sup>1</sup> The question to be decided is this,—Does Locke intend that by means of reflection we can gain any actual materials of knowledge distinct from the intimations of our senses, or that the use of it is simply to *combine* and *compare* the materials which the senses primarily afford us? If he mean the former, then he admits that there are *two* distinct and *original* sources of knowledge; if the latter, then he allows but *one* real inlet for our ideas, although reflection

<sup>1</sup> It must be admitted that Locke uses the term reflection in a very wavering and undefined sense. See Stewart's remarks on it in his Preliminary Dissertation—also Hallam's "Lit. of Europe," vol. iii. p. 365. I still think, however, that the general and predominating use of the word in Locke's Essay may be ascertained with some accuracy.

may give us the means of extensively modifying and combining them. A careful perusal of the first few chapters of the second book, is, I think, quite sufficient to convince us, that the latter of these opinions was the one which Locke decidedly entertained.

That sensation is the *first* developed of these two sources, he again and again asserts in such passages as the following,—“ I see no reason to believe that the soul thinks before the senses have furnished it with ideas ;” and again more clearly, “ The mind first employs itself about the impressions made on the senses :” and in many other passages assertions of a similar nature are made.<sup>1</sup> To determine, however, more accurately the exact province of reflection (*i. e.*, of the mind’s observation of its own operations), in the acquisition of our ideas, Locke gives us an analysis of what these inward operations really are. The first is *perception*, which he uses to express merely the consciousness of our sensations.<sup>2</sup> As, therefore, perception is expressly said to be *passive*, and is only occupied with our sensations, it cannot add any fresh material to our knowledge. The next chapter treats of *retention*, which is the same as memory, and which we see, at once, can only occupy itself with ideas already in the mind.<sup>3</sup> The third operation is *discernment*, which expresses

<sup>1</sup> See Essay, Book II. chap. ii. *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. chap ix. sec. 1, 2, 3, 4.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. chap. x.

simply the separation of our ideas.<sup>1</sup> The fourth is *comparison*; the fifth, *composition*; and the sixth and last, *abstraction*; all which do nothing more than either combine several ideas together, or isolate some general property belonging to them, and contemplate it by itself.<sup>2</sup> These are the mental operations, to discern which is the province of reflection; and it is clear from the whole account, that the different faculties, thus enumerated, are made to hold a place quite subordinate to sensation; that they operate only upon the material afforded by it; and that, in fine, there is only one *real* inlet to our ideas, that, namely, which is the inlet to all the impressions of the material world.

To propound a theory is always an easy task; to sustain it is altogether a different thing. Locke's main difficulty was now to come, that is, to show how every idea, of whatever nature, could enter the mind through the two media which he had pointed out. For this purpose he selects those ideas which appear *least* dependent upon sensation, and had usually been considered as innate; and enters into many long and acute processes of reasoning, in order to bring them within the limits of experience. These ideas, to take them as near as possible in the order in which he has discussed them, are those of Space, of Time, of Infinity, of Causality, of personal Identity, of Substance, and lastly, of Good and Evil. To enter into the discussion of these ideas separately,

<sup>1</sup> See Essay, Book II. chap. xi. sec. 1, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. chap. xi. sec. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.



would lead us far beyond our present prescribed limits, and we must, therefore, endeavour to point out, as clearly as we are able, the *fundamental error* which runs through the whole. This is, in fact, no other than that which we have before pointed out, namely, the confounding of the cause with the occasion. Victor Cousin, following the language of the schools, terms the true origin of an idea the *logical* condition of its existence, while the occasion of it he calls the *chronological* condition. In seeking, for example, the logical order of any two ideas, we attempt to determine which one *rationally* includes the other. In seeking the chronological order, we attempt to determine which one the mind actually *becomes first conscious of*. If, according to the former method, we seek to deduce our notions in a logical series one from another, we shall find that the abstract ideas, which I have mentioned above, are all of them primary—that they are the *first* links in the several chains of subordinate ideas, which are referable to them as their categories; but if, according to the latter method, we simply ask, what is the order *in time* according to which these notions actually arose within us, then we shall find that the date of our first experience is the date also of our first conceptions.<sup>1</sup> Let us take, as an example, the idea of *space*, and the idea of *matter*. Which one, we ask, is dependent upon the other? *Logically*, the notion of body must evidently depend upon that of space; for you can conceive of the

<sup>1</sup> Histoire de la Philosophie, Leçon 17.

existence of no single body, and no aggregate of bodies, without placing them in space, while you can easily conceive of space denuded of all matter. On the other hand, in the *chronological* order, the idea of Body would stand, at least, contemporary with that of Space, since it is our first contact with body which occasions our reason to form for itself the absolute notion of space, as that in which all matter must exist. The want of this distinction, or rather the frequent neglect of the logical dependence of our ideas, one upon the other, is the fundamental error pervading the whole attempt, which Locke makes, to give to our pure and absolute conceptions an empirical origin.

To maintain his theory satisfactorily, Locke is betrayed into statements which, however acute, will not stand the test of a closer analysis. The idea of Space he derives immediately from *Sight* and *Touch*, the correctness of which he thinks so evident, "that it would be as needless to go to prove that men perceive by their sight a distance between bodies of different colours, or between parts of the same body as that they see colours themselves."<sup>1</sup> Now, what does Locke mean by saying that we derive this idea from Sight and Touch? Not assuredly that we can see or touch Space itself, not that it is an actual *sensation*,—but that, when we see *Bodies* apart, there is immediately suggested to us the idea of the intervening distance; and so also that, when we have *felt* resistance, the negative of

<sup>1</sup> Essay, Book II. chap. xiii. sec. 2.

non-resistance brings us to the same notion. The idea of Space, then, on Locke's theory, though distinct from that of Body, yet is derived by *inference* from it. In reply to this, however, we ask, does not the idea of Body logically include and suppose that of Space? Can we conceive of Body without Space? Can we see it or touch it without seeing it and touching it *in space*? To us it seems clear, as Kant has abundantly shown, that the idea of Space is one of the very forms of all sensation, though not, as he supposes, simply of a subjective value; and if so, it must *virtually* exist before any induction from sensible experience can possibly be made.

Of a similar nature is his account of the notion of *Time*. This he would show arises from reflection upon the succession of our thoughts. It is an induction from our *inward* experience. But is not the notion of Time itself an element necessary to this inward experience? All our ideas—all the inward events of our life—must exist *in Time*; it is the subjective sphere of the mind's operations. How, then, can it result as an experimental deduction from those operations?

The idea of Infinity, again, Locke makes purely negative; a conclusion which he drew, as it seems to me, from regarding the word *idea* as implying a distinct image in the mind. That we cannot have an image of Infinity in the mind is true, but that is no proof that we may not rise to a *conception* of it.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mr Hallam has some excellent remarks upon Locke's use of the term *Idea*. "We cannot have an Image in the mind of a thousand-

As to personal Identity, it consists, according to Locke, entirely in our consciousness ; so that, if our consciousness ceases, we of course must cease to be the same persons that we were before. According to his own doctrine, therefore, that consciousness ceases during sleep, it follows that our personal Identity is nightly suspended. But here, as before, we may ask, could we have ever had any consciousness at all—that is, could the mind have ever been conscious of its own operations *as its own*, without the idea of personal Identity being virtually at the basis? The one process logically involves the other.

Of Power, or Causation, Locke's account is somewhat varying. In one passage he derives it from the observation, that we can move our bodies at pleasure ; or that one object in nature can produce motion in another.<sup>1</sup> In another place he derives it from reflection upon our own faculties, independently of Body.<sup>2</sup> The whole chapter on Power, indeed, seems to me to be written in a much higher strain of philosophising than the preceding portions of the Essay.

The distinct idea of Substance, Locke repeatedly denies, except it be a cluster of sensations with the

sided figure—but we have the most precise conception of it.” Again he says, “What Image can we form of a differential, which can pretend to represent it in any other sense than as  $dx$  represents it, by suggestion not by resemblance?”—*Lit. of Europe*, vol. iii. p. 367.

<sup>1</sup> Book II. chap. vii. sec. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Book II. chap. xxi. sec. 1.

*supposition* of some substratum in which they adhere—a supposition which he compares to the Indian fable of the tortoise that supports the world. If an idea is to mean an image, or actual resemblance in the mind, he is undoubtedly right ; but that we have the *à priori conception* of Substance as a synthetical judgment, we shall have in the sequel many proofs.

Lastly—Locke's ideas of Good and Evil are entirely of the utilitarian character ; they are made the result instead of being held up as the foundation of our ideas of reward and punishment.<sup>1</sup>

In all these instances Locke has admirably traced the *conditions* under which the reason is excited to action, and the occasions upon which its own primitive judgments are formed, in accordance with the laws of our intellectual being ; but he has erred in representing the absolute idea, as being derivable in each case from those allied sensations, by which the understanding is indeed aroused, but not conditioned to the perception of fundamental truth.

With regard to the true origin of these ideas, we should come to the same conclusion as we did in the case of first principles ; namely, that they cannot be strictly speaking *innate*, inasmuch as nothing is given by nature in its abstract form. The original operations of the human reason are its *primitive judgments*. These judgments, at first particular

<sup>1</sup> Book I. chap. iii. *passim*. Locke's utilitarianism was the chief ground of the attack he sustained from Lord Shaftesbury, and other ethical writers of the same age.

or concrete, are generalised, by the aid of language, into propositions or axioms; and these propositions still further separate themselves into *ideas*. What is properly innate within us is the faculty, by which we are led to form these primitive judgments, so soon as we actually come into contact with the outer world. Our *absolute ideas*, therefore, which are virtually included in them, although not of themselves innate, yet arise by necessity from this *innate power of understanding and reason*, and are by no means, as Locke would have it, conceptions drawn originally from the intimations of sense. By taking up this position he was obliged, as we have seen, to attenuate or altogether destroy some of the most necessary and undeniable conceptions of the human mind; but he upheld the credit of the theory with which he started, and which, we have no doubt with the most thorough conviction of its truth, he laboured most earnestly to support. Such was the consequence of reducing his data to his principles, instead of deducing his principles from his data.<sup>1</sup>

The third book of Locke's Essay is a treatise on the philosophy of Language. We shall not occupy space by making any remarks upon this. With the exception of some leaning to that species of nominalism, which was afterwards more completely developed by Horne Tooke, there is much practical wisdom contained in the cautions which are given, against being led astray by the force of words, or

<sup>1</sup> On the true theory of Ideas, see Cousin's "Histoire de la Philosophie," Leçon 22, towards the close.

being deluded, as Bacon terms it, by the *Idola Fori*.

Before we close, however, our critique upon this immortal Essay, we must offer a few considerations upon the fourth book. Hitherto Locke had been occupied simply and solely with *ideas* and their origin; he had kept himself strictly within the limits of *psychology*, and sought to determine nothing, except what properly belonged to the inner world. In the fourth book he makes the passage from psychology into *ontology*, and institutes inquiries like the following: What is the nature of ideas? What do they represent? What is the knowledge of objective existence we obtain from them? And what confidence may we have in the correctness and reality of this knowledge?—questions which all must admit to be of no small importance. So long as we regard our ideas simply *as ideas*, it is evident that we are completely shut up within ourselves: how, then, are we to take the step from the subjective world to the objective; and how are we to know that the one is a veracious manifestation of the other? This leads us naturally to ask, what is Locke's real theory respecting the nature of ideas—a point, the determination of which has occasioned no little dispute amongst philosophers. Dr Reid contends, that Locke's "*idea*" is a real independent existence in the original and proper use of the term, and claims the honour of having exploded this long sustained theory, on the principles of common sense. Dr Brown withheld from him the

honour thus laid claim to, and denied that Locke, in common with many others of the same and a former age, used the term in the sense thus attributed to them.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the true statement of the case lies midway between these two extremes. Dr Reid attributes to Locke too much of the peripatetic doctrine, while Dr Brown as certainly attributes to him just so much too little. That Locke believed all the apparatus of sensible species, intelligible species, and phantasms, as given by Aristotle, we think very improbable; at the same time he manifestly held a representative theory respecting the doctrine of perception; supposing, not with Dr Reid, that our knowledge of external things is *immediate*, but that, beside the perceiving mind, and the thing perceived, there is the representation, or *idea* of the latter, as the connecting link between them. This may be seen by consulting the fourth chapter of the fourth book of his Essay, in which he says,—“It is evident that the mind knows not things immediately, but by the intervention of the ideas it has of them: our knowledge, therefore, is real only so far as there is a conformity between our ideas and the reality of things.” Here, then, we have plainly his fixed sentiment, that knowledge depends upon the conformity of our ideas with the external things they represent, and that error consists in their non-conformity. In this theory, we conceive, Locke has taken up an untenable position;

<sup>1</sup> Compare Reid's "Inquiry into the Human Mind," chapters i. and vii., with Brown's "Lectures," Lecture xxvii.



and we willingly concede, therefore, to Dr Reid, the honour of having put the whole subject in a clear light, and fixed it, as far as he went, on its right foundation.<sup>1</sup>

Viewing the representative theory of human knowledge as we will, it is beset with difficulties. First, on the supposition that the image or idea which intervenes between the mind and the outer world is material, we find it impossible to account for those notions, which do not admit of being represented by a material symbol. Of this kind are our notions of secondary qualities, for who can conceive of the material image of blue or green, or soft or hard?<sup>2</sup> Of the same nature also are all those notions we have of the spiritual world, for is it to be conceived that mind, immaterial in itself, throws off a material image in order that it may be the object of its own contemplation? In fact, Locke gives up philosophy altogether as soon as he comes to consider the real existence of anything beyond the material, and throws himself upon revelation as the only source from which we can infer its certainty.<sup>3</sup> Again, if we suppose the *idea* to be immaterial, we are no better off: for here the chief objection against the whole representative hypothesis has its full force. Allow, for argument's sake, that our knowledge

<sup>1</sup> On this perceptionalist controversy, consult Sir W. Hamilton's admirable article—Edinburgh Review, No. 52.

<sup>2</sup> Locke virtually abandons his own theory here, and admits that we can have no representation of secondary qualities whatever.—Essay, Book II. chap. viii. sec. 13.

<sup>3</sup> See Essay, Book IV. chap. xi. sec. 12.

does all depend upon the conformity of the idea with its object; how, then, are we to infer this conformity? Without being able to institute some comparison between the image and the original, it is clear we can never know whether they resemble each other or not; but to institute this comparison supposes a *direct* perception of that original, independent of its representative idea, and shuts us up to this alternative—either that we have the means of knowing objects without the intervention of ideas, and therefore that they are unnecessary; or else, if we have no means of knowing them otherwise, that we can never be sure of the conformity between the object and the idea, on which very conformity our knowledge depends; and therefore, can have no secure ground for certain knowledge at all. The refutation of the “ideal system” lies, in fact, almost in a nutshell. The intervening image must be material or immaterial. If it be material, it still remains to show how the mind can communicate with it without a second image; if it be immaterial, then how can it communicate with the outward world any better than the mind itself? The only conclusion to which the whole theory can ultimately lead, is that of the most rigid scepticism.<sup>1</sup>

That scepticism is the real result of the theory we have now described, is seen from the use that has been actually made of it. Berkeley drew from it his arguments against the existence of the material

<sup>1</sup> For a more full discussion of the theory of representationalism, consult Cousin's “*Histoire de la Philosophie*,” Leçon xxii.

world, and Hume based upon the same the principles, by which he sought to involve the whole superstructure of human knowledge, from its very foundations, in one scene of doubt and confusion.

Our perceptions, as Dr Reid has shown in opposition to this theory, instead of depending upon an intermediate representative idea, are *direct* and *immediate*: the mind perceives and knows just because it has been so constituted, and possesses *within itself* those first principles (whether we call them with Kant forms of the understanding, or with Reid principles of common sense, or with Brown principles of intuitive belief,) which are the starting-points whence all our subsequent and deduced knowledge takes its rise.<sup>1</sup> The more accurate analysis, however, of this theory of perception we must leave until we come to the explanation of the philosophy of "common sense."

Into Locke's views respecting judgment, faith, enthusiasm, and some other points of a minor character, we shall not enter, because they bear but slightly upon the main features of his philosophy. We cannot part from him, however, without bearing testimony to his singular independence of mind, his acuteness and strength of intellect, his rectitude of character, his honest and unflinching search after truth, and his zeal for the diffusion of a manly, intelligent piety. If, however, we would point out candidly the influence which Locke exerted upon the progress of speculative philosophy, it must be con-

<sup>1</sup> Reid's "Inquiry into the Human Mind," chap. ii. sec. 6, 7, 8, 9.

fessed, that notwithstanding all the admirable lessons which his writings contain, they manifested a decided leaning towards sensationalism, and included, though unknown to himself, germs which, after a time, bore the fruits of utilitarianism in morals, of materialism in metaphysics, and of scepticism in religion. To exhibit the process by which this was effected, will be the next point to which our attention must be directed.

SECT. III.—*Effects of Locke in England.*

The "Essay on the Human Understanding" enjoyed, from its very first publication, a reputation almost unparalleled in the whole history of philosophy. The principles there advocated with so much acuteness, and so earnest a love of truth, became almost universally diffused; but unfortunately they fell into the hands of men who, being entirely wanting in the simplicity of mind and the sincere piety which had distinguished their author, appropriated them to purposes altogether foreign to his intentions.

The deistical school of writers, which at this time arose, armed themselves with many of Locke's conclusions in order to enforce their own sceptical opinions. Collins aimed chiefly at establishing upon a firm basis the doctrine of necessity; Dodwell struck out boldly into the path of materialism; while Mandeville, assuming with Locke that there are no innate practical principles in the human mind, dealt

a mischievous blow at the root of all moral distinctions. From hence originated some of the most acute controversies which the history of mental and moral science presents,—controversies which summoned the ability of Stillingfleet, the wit and elegance of Shaftesbury, the acuteness of Norris, and the gigantic strength of Clarke, in opposition to the immoral and irreligious tendencies, which seemed likely to flow from the empirical principles, that were now apparently taking so firm a hold upon the philosophic spirit of the age. These, however, we must pass over, as their names are better known in the departments of ethics and theology than in that of metaphysics: we have only mentioned them in order to show the more immediate effects of Locke's philosophy upon the literary society of the day, and to indicate the fact, that his principles were neither established nor developed without the earnest protest and the powerful opposition of some of the first thinkers and reasoners of that period.

The next really philosophical writer, whom we find carrying out the sensational tendency to its fuller development, is David Hartley. The philosophy of Hartley is especially worthy of attention, from the fact of its being the first decided attempt we know of, at combining the study of psychology with the results of modern physiological investigations. Hartley was educated at Cambridge for the medical profession, and was led, both by the nature of his studies, and by the influence of the metaphysical school represented in that university by

Dr (afterwards Bishop) Law, to adopt some of the more extreme principles of sensationalism. His first attempt was to propound a theory of sensation, grounded upon an anatomical inspection of the nervous system. Locke, though himself of the medical profession, had never ventured to speculate upon the method by which sensations are communicated to the mind; regarding the subject as purely hypothetical, he probably never formed an opinion upon it, but left it untouched, as belonging to that mysterious and unknown process, which connects together our bodily affections and mental feelings. Hartley, on the contrary, desirous of supplying what he considered a deficiency in the philosophy of Locke, proposed to account for the phenomena of sensation by certain *vibrations*, which he supposed to take place in the nervous system.<sup>1</sup> The vibratory hypothesis of Hartley is too well known by all the readers of modern philosophy to require here to be explained at any length, and besides, is now gone so much into disrepute as hardly to require any refutation; we shall content ourselves, therefore, with making two remarks upon it. The first is, that *as an hypothesis* there is a great improbability of its being true, owing to the extreme unfitness of the soft and pulpy material of which the nerves are composed, to produce or propagate vibrations. The second remark is, that even if all these physical changes and vibratory movements were *proved* to exist, yet still there would be as great a chasm as

<sup>1</sup> Observations on Man, chap. i. sec. 1.

ever between the material condition of our sensation and the ultimate mental effect. To say that the feeling itself consists in these nervous movements is absurd. "There may be," says a writer in the *Edinburgh Review* (Oct. 1806), "little shakings in the brain for anything we know, and there may even be shakings of a different kind accompanying every act of thought or perception; but that the shakings themselves are the thoughts or perception, we are so far from admitting, that we find it impossible to comprehend what can be meant by the assertion. The shakings are certain throbbings, vibrations, or stirrings, in a whitish half fluid substance like custard, which we might see perhaps or feel if we had eyes and fingers sufficiently small or fine for their office. But what should we see or feel, upon the supposition that we could detect by our senses everything that actually took place in the brain? We should see the particles of the substance change their place a little, move a little up or down, to the right or to the left, round about, or zig-zag, or in some other course or direction. This is all that we could see if Dr Hartley's conjecture were proved by actual observation, because this is all that exists in motion according to our conception of it, and all that we mean when we say that there is motion in any substance. Is it intelligible, then, to say that this motion, the whole of which we see and comprehend, *is* thought and feeling, and that thought and feeling will exist wherever we can excite a similar motion in a similar substance? In our

humble apprehension the proposition is not so much false as utterly unmeaning and incomprehensible." Admitting, then, the truth of Hartley's *vibratiuncles*, we get no nearer than ever to the explanation of the *mental* phenomena of sensation.

Had our author confined his philosophical speculations to this theory, his name would probably never have come down to our own day in the annals of philosophy: the other doctrines, however, which he grounded upon it, more especially that of association, have given him a lasting reputation amongst the most ingenious writers of the last century. The law of the association of Ideas was first clearly hinted at by Hobbes, who in his "Leviathan" speaks of it in several places, under the phrases "trains of thought," or "trains of imagination."<sup>1</sup> The *term* association was first used by Locke, in his immortal Essay,<sup>2</sup> to express certain connexions which exist between one thought and another in the flow of our consciousness. Tucker, in his "Light of Nature Pursued," used the word *combination* as better suited to express the phenomena of the case:<sup>3</sup> but Hartley preferred to retain the original word association, although at the same time he made a complete revolution in the meaning which was to be attached to it. In order to appreciate this change of meaning, we should observe that Locke had applied the term "association of

<sup>1</sup> Leviathan, chap. iii.

<sup>2</sup> Essay, Book II. chap. xxxiii.

<sup>3</sup> Light of Nature, chap. ix.



ideas" only to those more striking and remarkable combinations, which appear to be rather out of the ordinary course of thought, than to the *law* by which the whole flow of our consciousness is regulated. Hartley, on the other hand, used it to express *any combination of thought or feeling whatever, which is capable of becoming habitual by means of repetition.*

His theory, then, as nearly as we can convey it in few words, is as follows. The objects of the external world affect, in some manner, the extreme ends of the nerves, which spread from the brain as centre to every part of the body. This affection produces a vibration, which is continued along the nerve by the agency of an elastic ether, until it reaches the brain, where it constitutes the phenomenon we term sensation. When a sensation has been experienced several times, the vibratory movement from which it arises acquires the tendency to repeat itself spontaneously, even when the external object is not present. These repetitions or *relics* of sensation are *ideas*, which in their turn possess the property of recalling each other by virtue of mutual association among themselves.<sup>1</sup> According to this doctrine, for example, the sight of an apple will recall the sensation formerly produced by the taste, thus giving rise to the *idea* of its taste; and the idea of the taste again will give rise to any other ideas which have been before experienced at the same time. Thus the things to which association

<sup>1</sup> Observations on Man, chap. i. sec. 2.

applies, Hartley considers to be these three—sensations, ideas, and muscular movements (emotions being completely confounded with sensations, and therefore not being mentioned separately). These classes of phenomena having been previously experienced together, may recall each other at any time or in any order—a fact which our author briefly expresses by the following law. “If any sensation A, idea B, or muscular motion C, be associated a sufficient number of times with any other sensation D, idea E, or muscular motion F, it will at last excite the simple idea belonging to the sensation D, the very idea E, or the very muscular motion F.” So much then concerning association generally.<sup>1</sup>

Passing over Hartley’s classification of the laws of association, I shall only stop to notice *one* principle, which he makes of supreme importance, and that is the law of transference. The nature of this law is as follows. An idea is sometimes associated with another through the medium of a third; but in process of time this intermediate idea may be disregarded, and yet the connexion between the first and third may notwithstanding remain. Thus the idea of pleasure, which is so indissolubly connected with *money*, arises from the conveniences which it is able to procure, while in the mind of the miser the conveniences are lost sight of, and the very possession of the money itself is regarded

<sup>1</sup> For the full description of the generation of ideas by association, see chap. i. sec. 2 and 3.

as containing the whole enjoyment. In this way Hartley accounts for almost all the emotions and passions of the human mind. The domestic affections, for instance, arise from the transference of the pleasure derived from parental kindness to the parent itself; the social and patriotic affections from transferring the pleasures of society to the country which affords them; in like manner also the moral and religious affections, the love of virtue and the love of God, arise from the pleasures connected with virtuous and pious conduct, being transferred to the law of action, or to the supreme Lawgiver from whom these pleasures have emanated. In this way Hartley expands his principle of association, until it affords him an explanation, more or less clearly, of all the multifarious phenomena of man's consciousness.<sup>1</sup>

The subordinate effects of these principles are easy to be imagined. If all our ideas are but relics of sensations, and all excited spontaneously by the laws of association, it is abundantly evident that the power of the will must be a nonentity, that man can really have no control over his own mind, that he is the creature of irresistible necessity. Hartley was accordingly a firm necessarian.<sup>2</sup> Another natural effect of the theory of vibrations is materialism. I am aware that Hartley is not chargeable with maintaining this doctrine; his sincere religious character, coupled with great

<sup>1</sup> See *Observations on Man*, chap. iv. sec. 4, 5, 6.

<sup>2</sup> See his chap. on "The Mechanism of the Human Mind."

acuteness in philosophical thinking, held him back from admitting a system which can seldom be united with deep religious feelings, *never* with eminent metaphysical abilities. But that this philosophy naturally led to materialistic views in others, whose minds were not under the same restraints as his own, was abundantly proved by the school to which he gave origin. A third effect of the Hartleian metaphysics was a bold defence of nominalism, which, though a matter of minor consequence in comparison with those above mentioned, yet sufficiently indicated the tendency of the whole system.<sup>1</sup>

That there is great value to be attached to much which Hartley has drawn from the law of association, and that he has afforded an explanation of many phenomena, before very imperfectly understood, cannot be denied. The very ardour, however, with which he threw himself into his system, and the very closeness with which he analysed the facts of the case, necessarily imparted a one-sidedness to his philosophy, and led to the neglect of some other facts equally important. The ground-principles of our intellectual life—the fundamental conceptions, without which even sensations could not be formed into any definite ideas whatever, all these were overlooked; the powers of the will, as exhibited in the working of the intellectual emotions, were summarily reduced to the category of sensation; and

<sup>1</sup> Observations, chap. iii. sec. i.

thus perception, judgment, memory, all our abstract ideas, and all our moral feelings, were alike consolidated together as the natural effect of the great law of association, and all shown to emanate from the vibrations of the nervous system! From these considerations it becomes evident how important a link the writings of Hartley formed in the chain of those causes by which the philosophy of sensation was aided on its road to complete empiricism. The result of those writings, indeed, soon showed that having conducted his speculations to the very verge of materialism, it was not in his power to prevent *those*, whom he had carried along with him in his reasoning, from overstepping the boundary.<sup>1</sup>

The principles of Hartley found, shortly after his death, an able and zealous expositor in Dr Priestley. The name of Priestley holds a position in the scientific history of our country, which his greatest opponents might envy, and with which his most ardent admirers may be content. It is not now, however, for the first time remarked, that the minds best fitted for prosecuting the labours of experimental philosophy, are by no means those from which we expect light to be cast into the more obscure region of metaphysical analysis. Priestley's mind was objective to an extreme; he could fix his

<sup>1</sup> The relation which Hartley bears to Hobbes, has been given by Mr Hallam, in an eloquent passage, "Lit. of Europe," vol. ii. p. 491.

Many notices of the philosophy of Hartley occur in various parts of the writings of Stewart, Brown, Young, and Mackintosh. By all these writers his errors have been exposed in different points of view, and his real merits awarded.

faith upon nothing, which had not the evidence of sense in some way or other impressed upon it. Science, morals, politics, philosophy, religion, all came to him under the type of the sensational. The most spiritual ideas were obliged to be cast into a material mould before they could commend themselves to his judgment or conscience. His intellect was rapid to an extraordinary degree; he saw the bearings of a question according to his own principles at a glance, and embodied his thoughts in volumes, whilst many other men would hardly have sketched out their plan. All this, though admirable in the man of *action*, was not the temperament to form the solid metaphysician, nay, it was precisely opposed to that deep reflective habit, that sinking into one's own inmost consciousness, from which alone speculative philosophy can obtain light and advancement. With such tendencies of mind, therefore, and living in an age, the whole bearing of which was away from the ideal to the sensational, it is not surprising that Priestley entered with energy into those principles of Hartley, from which he hoped to reduce all mental science to a branch of physical investigation.

The metaphysical position he assumed, may be fully seen in his "Examination of Reid, Beattie, and Oswald;" in fact, it is summed up in one extraordinary sentence, where he affirms, that "something has been done in the field of knowledge by Descartes, very much by Mr Locke, but most of all by Dr Hartley, who has thrown more useful

light upon the theory of mind, than Newton did upon the theory of the natural world !” After this acknowledgment of admiration towards the writings of Hartley, of course we could hardly expect to find anything else in the metaphysical works of Priestley, than a second edition of the Hartleian philosophy, revised, corrected, and expanded into a more mature form. Such, in fact, was precisely the case. The doctrine of philosophical necessity was more fully argued and more systematically enforced; utilitarian morals were maintained upon a broader basis, and illustrated by more copious examples; and materialism, from which Hartley himself had shrunk back, was now openly avowed.<sup>1</sup>

Priestley rested the truth of materialism upon two deductions. The first was, that thought and sensation are essentially the same thing—that the whole variety of our ideas, however abstract and refined they may become, are, nevertheless, but modifications of the sensational faculty. This doctrine, we shall see, had been more fully maintained in France, by Condillac. The second deduction was, that all sensation, and, consequently, all thought, arises from the affections of our material organisation, and, therefore, consists entirely in the motion of the material particles of which the nerves and brain are composed. It is but justice, however,

<sup>1</sup> See his “*Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity Explained*,”—and “*Disquisitions relating to Matter and Spirit*,” sec. 3, 4, 5, 6. Also his work entitled “*Hartley’s Theory of the Human Mind, with Essays relating to the subject of it*.”

here to add, that Priestley did not push his materialism so far as to evolve any conclusions contrary to the fundamental principles of man's natural religion, or to invalidate the evidences of a future state. In the full conviction of these truths he both lived and died. To sum up, then, the precise influence of Priestley upon the progress of sensationalism in our own country in a few words, we may say, that he succeeded in cutting the last tie which had held Hartley to the poor remains of spiritualism, that he reduced the whole phenomena of mind to organic processes, the mind itself to a material organisation, and mental philosophy to a physical science.

It might be expected, perhaps, that we should pause here in our history, to offer some remarks upon the abuses to which the principle of association has been subjected in the Hartleian school of philosophy, and to show how many of the simple phenomena of our intellectual and moral being have been there explained by other phenomena far more obscure and complex than themselves; but as this subject will come more fully under our consideration in a future chapter, we must waive the discussion of it for the present, and go on to exhibit the final issue to which this sensational tendency led.

Priestley had denied the separate reality of *mind* or rather *spirit* in man, but had not rejected the existence of it altogether in the universe. To do this, required another reasoner still more bold in urging his arguments to their ultimate conclusions, and less under the restraints of early religious asso-



ciations. Such a reasoner appeared in the person of Dr Darwin, who determined to banish *spirit* altogether from the universe, to make the infinite and omnipresent mind itself synonymous with the all-pervading powers of an impersonal nature, and thus to trample the most cherished of man's religious hopes under the feet of a materialistic unbelief. This we may regard as the culminating point of sensationalism. While idealism proceeds onwards in its conclusions, till it has banished matter, nay, everything else but the one eternal mind, in its various developments, out of existence, this opposed system of philosophy does not stop in the other direction, till it has reduced all mind, even the infinite mind itself, to nature and organisation.

In conclusion, the influence which sensationalism exerted *generally* upon the age, may be seen in its bearing upon many of the subordinate branches of philosophy. To take the philosophy of language as an instance, we have in Horne Tooke the grammarian of this school. It is needless to remind the reader of the ultra-nominalism which he professed; of the ingenious attempt he made, in his "*Επεξ Ηερεσιν*," to derive every word from some material symbol, and of the inference he drew, that our reason itself is the gradual result of language, instead of language being the direct product of our reason.<sup>1</sup>

The moralist and politician again, of the same

<sup>1</sup> An able reconsideration of some important points of the philosophy of language, will be found in Mr B. H. Smart's "*Outlines of Sematology*."

philosophy, appeared in the person of Jeremy Bentham, who stands forth as one of the most uncompromising advocates of the utilitarian system of ethics. Archdeacon Paley, another advocate of utilitarian morals, might also be mentioned as having philosophised under the guidance of Locke and of his most devoted follower, Abraham Tucker, and as having erected his ethical system upon principles derived from these sources. The very names of Bentham and Paley, however, remind us that we are already upon the confines of the eighteenth century, and that we must cease to pursue the results of sensationalism in our own country any further, until we come to look more particularly into the *characteristics* of the present age.

#### SECT. IV.—*Effects of Locke in France and Germany.*

Whilst the philosophy of sensationalism was thus developing itself in England, a similar progress was made in France with still greater energy and far more extensive reputation. The “Essay on the Human Understanding” being soon after its appearance translated and extensively read throughout the whole circle of the literati of that country, produced quite as great an impression there, as it did on this side the Channel. That there should arise, therefore, in France, as well as in England, defenders and expounders of Locke’s philosophy, was a matter almost of necessity. The first man who under-

took this task was *Condillac*, a writer who is universally placed at the head of the whole modern school of the French sensationalism. Condillac, like Hartley in our own country, came forth as a professed disciple and warm admirer of Locke, but in process of time departed equally far, if not still farther, than Hartley himself; from the principles of his master. The course, indeed, which he took was a very different one from that of the Cambridge philosopher; but whilst he avoided some of the faults into which that philosopher fell, he went perhaps with still hastier steps towards the region of extreme empiricism.

The first effort which Condillac made in the department of philosophy was a treatise on the origin of human knowledge (*"Essai sur l'Origine des Connaissances Humaines"*), the very title of which is sufficient to indicate his affinity with Locke; indeed the work itself may be regarded as a kind of reproduction with some modifications (not improvements) of the *"Essay on the Human Understanding."* The chief point in which we here trace the strong tendency of Condillac's mind towards sensationalism is in the explanation he gives of *reflection*, as one of the two sources of our ideas. Locke had made a very clear distinction between the passive and the active faculties; he saw plainly that whilst sensations are produced quite independently of ourselves, there are other powers which are brought into exercise by our own will. In his philosophy, then, sensation is the *passive* source from which we derive ideas, reflection

the *active* one ; in the former case ideas are, as it were, put into us from without, the mind meanwhile existing simply in a receptive state ; in the latter case the active faculties are *voluntarily* exerted, and from the material afforded by the senses construct a thousand complex ideas for themselves. Condillac, although at first assuming with Locke,<sup>1</sup> that these are the two only sources of our knowledge, manages in the course of his treatise so completely to modify and transform the nature of the active faculties, that every thing really distinguishing them from sensation entirely disappears. First of all, he identifies perception with consciousness, making sensation (as we also regard it) the bare feeling arising from any external object ; while perception (which is generally and correctly regarded as an active intellectual process) is made to be simply the self-consciousness of that feeling. Beginning then with sensation, we have perception used to mean the *consciousness* of sensation, then the other faculties, involved in the term reflection as used in the Lockian sense, are stripped of their active character, until the whole distinction between sensation and reflection is suppressed, the natural activity of the human mind virtually denied, and every inward phenomenon thus brought down to the level of our passive and sensational feelings.<sup>2</sup> Those abso-

<sup>1</sup> Essai sur l'Origine, &c. chap. i.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. sec. ii. chap. i. § xiii. Œuvres, Paris, 1798. "Ainsi la perception et la conscience ne sont qu'une même opération sous deux noms." Compare § xvi., in which a summary of his doctrine afforded us.

lute and pure conceptions of reason which Locke laboured so manfully to prove compatible with his own theory, Condillac explains with the greatest ease. Relative and absolute are to him one and the same thing. "Ideas," he says, "are absolute when we stop at them, and make them the object of our reflection without referring them to others; but when we consider them as subordinate to others, we call them relative;"<sup>1</sup> of such nature is the flimsy yet at the same time elegant analysis by which Condillac disposes of the most grave and subtle metaphysical questions.

The most ingenious part of this work, perhaps, is that in which he treats of the influence of language upon our mental phenomena. In his theory on this question he coincides to a great extent with Horne Tooke, making language the actual source from which many of our faculties are produced. Contemplation, recollection, imagination, judgment, reasoning, all those powers in a word which render the human mind superior to that of the lower animals, he supposes to grow up into distinctive faculties by the use of language.<sup>2</sup> In this theory, we conceive, he falls anew into what we have seen already to be the perpetual blunder of sensationalism, namely, the substitution of the occasion for the cause. Language, we admit, is the instrument by which most of our *complex* mental operations are perfected, but it is far from being the basis of them;

<sup>1</sup> Essai sur l'Origine, &c. sec. iii. § xiv.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. Partie II. sec. i. chaps. ix. and x.

on the contrary, the very fact of our being able to use language at all, is a sufficient proof of the prior existence of certain faculties within us, without which words would prove utterly unintelligible, and the most perfect language appeal to man no more than it does to a brute. It is, however, the constant tendency of sensationalism, from its first commencement to its complete development, to lose sight of the inherent and what we may properly term innate energies of the mind ; and then to attribute the phenomena to which they give rise, to the outward *occasion* by which those energies are brought into play. Language is the direct product of the human reason, as created by God ; but when it is once formed, then, we allow, it begins directly to *react* upon the mind which gave it birth, and thus to aid it in its still further advancement.

With this brief notice we must pass away from Condillac's first philosophical production to another of a more decided character, and which certainly lays far greater claim to originality,—I mean his *Treatise on Sensations* (“*Traité des Sensations.*”) In this work Condillac openly released himself from the authority of Locke, took up boldly the position, which in the former treatise he only seemed to be aiming at, and made good the claim to which he aspired, that of being the great apostle of sensationalism to his age. And here we shall be better able to point out, in what respect our author differs from Hartley, and to compare the systems, to which they have respectively given rise, with each other. Locke

admitted as an ultimate and unresolvable fact, the existence of certain intellectual faculties, of which, it will be remembered, he gives us a distinct classification. Hartley, as we have seen, attempted to account for all these faculties on the principle of association of ideas, and propounded a theory of sensation, based upon supposed vibrations in the nervous system, by which the whole phenomena of association might be explained. In doing this he entirely confounded (as we have shown) our emotional states with our sensational, and having done so, considered himself to have succeeded at length in accounting for all the phenomena, whether of sensation, intellection, or emotion, by means of his favourite vibratiuncles. Condillac, although starting with the same desire of simplifying what Locke had left unresolved, and of finding some *one* principle or other to which all our faculties may be reduced, very soon struck out into a different route. He regarded *sensation* as the one great unresolvable fact to which the chief attention of the philosopher is to be directed,—a fact for which he makes no attempt, like Hartley, to account, respecting which he propounds no theory whatever, but which, he supposes, we may take as the secure starting point for a complete system of psychology.<sup>1</sup> After pointing out the deficiency of Locke in not discovering, or attempting to discover, the principles by which the different intellectual operations, such as thinking, reasoning, knowing, willing, believing, are generated, he pro-

<sup>1</sup> *Traité des Sensations*. See the opening passage.

ceeds then to develop his own theory on this question, by showing them to be nothing more or less than *transformed sensations*.<sup>1</sup>

The method by which this is proved is somewhat of the following kind. First, let us assume the mind, as Locke did, to be a “*tabula rasa*.” Next let a simple sensation, as an odour, be experienced. The mind at once becomes occupied with the new feeling, and then commences what we term *attention*. Attention, therefore, is another name for sensation. After a time other sensations are experienced, and the mind becomes occupied with those which *have been*, as well as with those which *are*. When we are occupied with those which have been, and are now past, we term it *memory*; and memory, therefore, is no other than a transformed sensation. From the co-existence of past and present sensations results *comparison*, which is no other than a double attention. The comparison of different sensations, again, gives rise to *judgment*, and judgment to *abstraction*, &c.; so that all our intellectual powers, one after the other, are neither more nor less than transformed sensations.<sup>2</sup> A similar course is adopted with regard to the emotions. Sensations are either agreeable or disagreeable; hence arise desire and aversion. These sensations, however, may refer to the past, the present, or prospectively to the future; from whence spring the different passions of remorse, or hope, or joy,

<sup>1</sup> *Traité des Sensations*. See *Extrait raisonné*, “*Précis de la première partie*.”

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* partie I. chap. i. ii.



or fear,—in a word, the whole phenomena of our emotional nature.<sup>1</sup> Finally, the will itself, with all its mighty energies, is shown to be like the intellect, nothing more than a transformed sensation.<sup>2</sup>

To illustrate this doctrine, Condillac supposes a perfectly organised human being to be created, encased in a marble covering; and then, proceeding to lift this covering, he attempts, with great ingenuity, to show how the different mental phenomena would make their appearance one after the other, as the impressions of the external world were more freely admitted, until *the man* becomes morally and intellectually complete. Now, in all this he has marked very beautifully the various *occasions* upon which his statue would require the impulses derived from the external world, in order to bring its various faculties into operation; but he forgets that these occasions might exist for ever, and be eternally prompting to action, but that no intelligence would ever result unless the faculties were at hand, and all ready constituted for reacting upon them. Condillac has, in fact, from the very first step of his analysis, in which he explains attention, substituted the occasion for the cause. No doubt our experiencing a sensation is the occasion on which we first show the phenomenon that is termed attention, but we can by no means conclude from hence that sensation is the producing cause of attention, and

<sup>1</sup> *Traité des Sensations*, partie I. chap. iii.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* partie I. chap. iii. § 9.

affords all the elements of which it consists. Sensation is a purely passive thing; we experience it just as long as the organic impression lasts, and no longer; attention is something active and voluntary, which we can continue or suspend at pleasure; the one is a production from without, the other an energy from within; the one is necessary, the other free; the one is the action of the outward world upon the inward, the other is the reaction of the inward world upon the outward. In the very first step of his reasoning, therefore, Condillac makes a fatal oversight which vitiates all the rest, and deprives the whole superstructure of sensationalism, as he had erected it, of any solid foundation.<sup>1</sup>

The next step of his analysis is not more successful, that, namely, in which he derives the various faculties of memory, comparison, judgment, &c., from attention. When we attend to a sensation which *has been*, he argues, we are said to remember. But how, we ask, are we to do this? By what means is the sensation retained while others are rushing in upon us? Something more than mere *attention* is assuredly requisite to account for this power of *retention*. Again, comparison is said to be a double attention; but is the whole of what we mean by comparison comprised in the mere perception of the two things compared? Far from it. I can attend to two things without comparing them, or without being able to compare them; comparison

<sup>1</sup> For a full examination of Condillac's main positions, see Cousin's "Cours d'Histoire de la Philosophie Morale," Leçon iii.

supposes a *balancing of relations*, i. e. a judgment; mere perception supposes nothing of the kind. Still less is it possible to reduce the power of the will to this source—a power which, in its conscious freedom and spontaneous activity, is as unlike the passive phenomena of sensation as life differs from death. But into this discussion we must not enter; enough, we trust, has been said already just to point out the fundamental error of Condillac's philosophy, enough to show that however energetically you may pour in impressions from without, the supposed statue, though replete with life, must still remain mentally dark and inactive, until the spark of reason, and the native power of the will, begin to react upon them. To sum up, then, in few words, the influence of Condillac upon the progress of philosophy, we should say that he began a consistent disciple of Locke, and ended (in everything but drawing its last conclusions) an advocate of complete sensationalism.

Another well-known writer of the eighteenth century was Charles Bonnet (born at Geneva 1720, died there 1793) a man whose fame was only second to Condillac himself as the author of a vigorous and eloquent vindication of the sensational philosophy. His first writings were devoted to the illustration of nature, of whose beauty he had a deep perception. Rising, however, in regular gradation from nature to man, he produced his "*Essai Analytique sur les Facultés de l'Ame.*" In this work he treads somewhat closely in the footsteps of Condillac,

using even the same illustration of the statue, and seeking to study in the same way the material that each of the senses supplies towards the formation of our ideas. In two respects, however, there is a decided difference between them. Bonnet, unlike Condillac, and much in the same manner as Hartley, employed many physiological observations to aid his mental analysis. "I have put into my book," he remarks in the preface, "a great deal of physics and very little of metaphysics; but in truth what could I say of the mind, in itself? we know it so little! Man is a mixed being; he only has ideas by the intervention of the senses; and even his most abstract notions are derived from them. It is upon his body, and by his body, that the mind acts. It is necessary, then, always to come back to physics as to the first origin of all which the mind experiences; we know no more what *an idea* of the mind is, than the mind itself; but we know that our ideas are attached to certain fibres; we are able, then, to reason upon these fibres because we *see* them; we are able thus to study a little their movements, the results of their movements, and the bonds they have among themselves." Such is the use which Bonnet proposed to make of his physiological researches in the investigation of the human mind.

In another respect, however, Bonnet far surpassed Condillac, and that is in his resistance of the theory of transformed sensations, and his recognition of the mind's activity in the phenomena of attention and volition. In this respect he returns to Locke's

stand-point, and even employs the term reflection to designate the active, in opposition to the passive phenomena of the mind. Bonnet was far from adopting the more extreme results of sensationalism; and it was apparently to prevent its tendency from being carried too far that he wrote his "*Palin-génésie Philosophique*," in which he has advocated the immortality of the souls both of men and animals, and carried the idea of development in nature to such an extent, as to imagine that plants may become animals, animals men, and men angels.

Condillac and Bonnet left the position of speculative philosophy in France much in the same state as Hartley did in England; they all laid down the ground principles of sensationalism, but all, owing to their good sense and religious feeling, hesitated to draw the ultimate conclusions. Those conclusions, however, soon made their appearance in France to a much greater extent than they have ever done in England; so much so, indeed, that they seemed for a time entirely to absorb all other philosophy. Helvétius, Saint Lambert, and Condorcet, followed immediately in the track that had been thus pointed out, and applied the new psychological principles, which had burst with such éclat upon society, not only to philosophy generally, but more especially to the department of ethics. First of all, Helvétius, carrying this notion of empiricism to the farthest extremity it would admit, founded upon it a moral system of undisguised selfishness. His primary position is, that man owes all his superiority over the

lower animals to the superior organisation of his body; indeed he pushes this principle to such an extent as to affirm, that the human hand is the great agent in the world's civilisation, and that, but for its capability, we should never have risen above the brutes around us. Proceeding from this point, his chief positions are briefly these. That all minds are originally equal; that every faculty and emotion they possess is derived from sensation; that pleasure is the only good; and that self-interest is the true ground of morality, upon which the whole framework of individual action and political right depends.<sup>1</sup>

Saint Lambert followed closely in the steps of Helvétius, treating first of the *nature* of man, and then of his *duties*. With regard to human nature, he maintains that man, when he first enters upon the stage of life, is simply an organised and sentient mass, and that whatever feelings or thoughts he may afterwards acquire, still they are simply different manifestations of the sensational faculty, occasioned by the pressure of his various wants and necessities. With regard to ethics, he maintains that, as man possesses only sensations, his sole good must be personal enjoyment, his only duty the attainment of it; and that, as we may be mistaken as to

<sup>1</sup> Helvétius published his first work, "De l'Esprit," in 1758. It excited the greatest attention throughout Europe, and encountered much opposition. His other work, "De l'Homme," was published posthumously. The former is more theoretical, the latter more practical;—but both of them are founded upon the principles we have indicated.

what objects are really adapted to promote our pleasure, the safest rule by which we can judge of duty in particular cases is public opinion. In his "Catéchisme Universel," a book intended for public education, he has divided the whole mass of man's duty into three classes—his duty to himself, to his own family, and to society at large; while the duties of religion are never mentioned, and the very name of God altogether excluded. Condorcet's fundamental doctrine of ethics is the present perfectibility of mankind, both individually and socially, by means of education; a doctrine which he proposes to substitute in place of the sanctions both of morality and religion, as the great regenerating principle of human nature.<sup>1</sup>

The names of brilliant writers, however, crowd so thick upon us in this prolific period of French literature, that it is impossible to do more than select those which give a connected view of the regular development of the sensationalistic tendency.

<sup>1</sup> Marie-Jean-Antoine-Nicolas-Caritat, Marquis de Condorcet, was born in 1743 at Ribemont. In early life he gave indications of extraordinary powers, excelled as a mathematician, was the friend of d'Alembert, and a contributor to the *Encyclopædia*. He was proscribed by the Convention in 1793, and during his concealment wrote his chief work, "*Esquisse d'un Tableau Historique des Progrès de l'Esprit Humain*"—the object of which is to depict the progress of humanity towards social perfection up to his period, and point out the march it was still to take until its high destiny should be accomplished. His philosophy was entirely sensational, his ethics Epicuræan, and his hopes for man based altogether upon physical improvement. He poisoned himself in 1794, to save the ignominy of imprisonment or execution.

The crowning piece in which the ultimate results of the whole system are concentrated, was presented to the world by the Baron d'Holbach, in his "*Système de la Nature*," a work in which materialism, fatalism, and avowed atheism, all combine to form a view of human nature, which even Voltaire pronounced to be illogical in its deductions, absurd in its physics, and abominable in its morality.<sup>1</sup> The whole history of the literary society of France, during the latter half of the eighteenth century, is, in fact, but a comment upon the progress of sensationalism towards its ultimate climax. The school of Voltaire shows us the effects of it while still incomplete, shrinking, as it yet did, from that hard materialism, that blind fatality, and that daring atheism, to which it afterwards attained. But the way to all this was already prepared; the bud was already formed, which only needed time to expand in the full light of day, in order to show its colours in their very deepest dye. In short, let any one view the brilliant circles of talent and impiety, which at once enlivened and disgraced the French capital—circles rendered famous by the wit and learning of d'Alembert, Diderot, Dupuis, Baron de Grimm, Galiani, Madame d'Épinay, not to mention others equally celebrated in the literary world, and he has a complete reflection, as from a mirror, of the philosophy of sensationalism when expanded into all its various ramifications,

<sup>1</sup> The English reader will find this work well described, and ably though briefly analysed, in a note appended to Lord Brougham's "*Discourse on Natural Theology*."



and at the same time brought down to the level of daily life.

But the great literary manifestation of that age and country, I mean the French Encyclopædia of Sciences, may be regarded as the most formal embodiment of the spirit of its philosophy. Nature, in her outward manifestations, is the foundation of all its researches, man is to it but a mass of organisation, mind the development of our sensations, morality self-interest, and God the diseased fiction of an unenlightened and enthusiastic age. The whole intellect being thus concentrated upon the outward and material, gave rise, it is true, to the noblest discoveries in the department of physical science; but, at the same time, religion, alas! was disowned, morality degraded, and man himself made but a feeble link in the great chain of events, by which nature is inevitably accomplishing her blind but glorious designs. The storm of the Revolution, to which these principles, in their political bearing, had not a little tended, broke in upon this scene of philosophical irreligion, from the confusion of which a fresh and regenerating element sprang up, which has given to the nineteenth century a new state of society, a new political constitution, and, as we shall hereafter see, a new philosophy likewise.

Before concluding this chapter, we must just hint at the fact, that the philosophy of Locke, in addition to its mighty influence upon England and France, penetrated also into Germany. The court of Frederick the Great gathered around it many of the

first literary characters of France, and thus afforded a channel by which the writings of Locke, together with those of his disciples, flowed into that country. Without occupying any space in describing the works of Feder, of his pupil Tittel, of Weisshaupt, and of others who are but little known in this country, I may just mention that Herder and Tiedemann, both celebrated for their great services in elucidating the history of philosophy, belonged, in a certain degree, to the school of Locke. Sensationalism, however, played but a feeble part in this country, as it was soon eclipsed by the great hero of idealism, who, for more than a quarter of a century, attracted to himself the eye of every philosophical inquirer as to the luminary of the age in which he lived and shone.

The whole sketch we have thus given of the sensationalistic philosophy, forms one connected illustration of the effects, which naturally flow from giving predominance to one out of the three fundamental ideas of the human mind, that, namely, of finite nature, or the not-me. As this idea is a true one, the philosophy which originates in it gives us true results in its own department, that of physical science; but as it is not *the only* fundamental idea that exists in the mind, we soon become sensible of the errors in which we are necessarily involved, when we attempt to build upon it the whole fabric of human knowledge.

## CHAPTER II.

### ON THE PROGRESS OF IDEALISM FROM THE PERIOD OF DESCARTES TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

BEFORE we proceed to the historical sketch, to which this chapter is devoted, we shall occupy a few lines to remind the reader of the principle by which we are guided in forming it. We have shown that there are three fundamental notions existing in the human mind, as the primary elements of thought: 1st, that of finite self; 2dly, that of finite nature; 3dly, that of the absolute, the unconditioned, the infinite. The whole multiplicity of our conceptions are referrible to some one of these three, as the irreducible notion, or category from which it springs. The first includes all inward phenomena, the second all outward phenomena, while the third embraces those various ideas of infinity and perfection, which we attribute neither to nature nor self, but to some existence equally removed beyond both.

As these three notions universally exist in the human mind, we naturally expect to find them all three occupying a place in the philosophy of every age; and seldom, perhaps never, does such an expectation deceive us. There are many systems of philosophy which admit them all, assigning the

greater importance it may be to one, or it may be to another; while there are other systems which are built up entirely upon one of the three as their foundation, to the complete exclusion of the rest. The superstructure of sensationalism, for example, when perfected, rests solely upon the basis of the *second* of these notions—that of the external or material world; and we have seen in the last chapter in what way this notion was gradually made to occupy the place of the other two, until first the finite mind of man, and at last the infinite mind of God, were reduced to matter and organisation, both cognisable through the medium of the senses. In the present chapter we are to show, in a like manner, the progress of idealism from those systems which have given their chief, though not exclusive, attention to the nature and powers of the human spirit, to those in which the material world has disappeared, and *mind* become the sole existence in the universe. As idealism, however, in the sense we have employed it, includes both the notion of self and also that of the absolute, we shall see that it sometimes assumes a subjective form, and sometimes an objective, according to the predominance of one of these notions over the other. In these different forms, for example, it played a very prominent part in the philosophy of the ancient world. As our present object, however, is not to take cognisance of it at that period, we must proceed to see in what manner and to what extent the idealistic tendency has shown itself from the commencement,

and during the progress of the modern schools of metaphysical science.

SECT. I.—*First Movement as seen in Descartes, Malebranche, and Spinoza.*

Of the whole modern movement of metaphysical science we have already pointed out Bacon and Descartes as the founders; the former evincing a predominant tendency to sensationalism, the latter to idealism. For Bacon we claim the decided superiority in comprehensiveness of mind. He alone seemed to take in at one glance the whole circumference of human knowledge; he alone knew how to assign to each separate branch its proper position, to detect the prejudices by which it was impeded, and to furnish the true method by which advancement in every case was to be made. The imperfection of his philosophy, however, was its almost exclusive adaptation to the practical investigation of *nature*. Descartes, while he by no means neglected physical science, and stood forth as one of the first mathematicians of his day, yet was chiefly pre-eminent for his power of intense reflection—for his acute analysis of mind and its operations. Bacon had shown the true principles of inductive philosophy in their application to natural science. Descartes now took hold of those principles, and applied them to the investigation of the human mind. They both appealed to the observation of *facts* as the ground of

all knowledge, but the one confined himself chiefly to the facts of the outer world,—while the other appealed mainly to the facts of consciousness. On this ground it is that Descartes has unquestionably merited the reputation of standing at the head of the whole modern movement of metaphysical philosophy.<sup>1</sup> The key to this movement was furnished by the “*Novum Organum* ;” but it was the French philosopher who applied it to the door of the human spirit, and first entered there with the lamp of *analysis* in his hand.

In reviewing the life and literary labours of Descartes, the first thing which strikes us forcibly is his complete independence of all authority. It was before he had attained his twentieth year, that he threw up the dogmas he had been taught by the Jesuits at La Flèche, and determined by the simple energy of his own mind to create a new philosophy; that is, to lay a new foundation for the whole superstructure of human knowledge. This very determination pointed out to him in part the *method* he should pursue. Left to the simple power of his own reflection, he was naturally led to assume the human *consciousness* as the true starting-point for all scientific research, and the analysis of the facts of our consciousness as the only proper method of creating a sound philosophy. In thus doing he established the fundamental principle, which we regard as the corner-stone of all the metaphysics of modern

<sup>1</sup> This title is awarded him by Stewart in his “Dissertation on the Progress of Philosophy.”

Europe, namely, that as natural science is based upon inductions drawn from the actual *observation* of the world without, so metaphysical science is based upon inductions similarly drawn from reflection upon the world within. Let us see, then, how he proceeded in this analysis.

The first thing that we are conscious of, begins Descartes, is a multiplicity of sensations, impressions, or ideas of various kinds, passing in succession before our view. But of these we soon find some to be so contradictory and others so dubious, that it is impossible for any one to admit them all as veracious. The real philosopher, indeed, will admit *none* except those which can be proved strictly consonant with the truth of things. The primary position, therefore, from which all philosophy springs is *doubt*.<sup>1</sup> Let it not be supposed from this, however, that Descartes nurtured the spirit of scepticism; doubt was never intended to be a part of his philosophical system, but merely a negation of errors and prejudices previous to the affirmation of those first irrefragable positions, on which all science was to be grounded.<sup>2</sup> Let us see how these positions are to be found.

There is one thing, he proceeds, of which we cannot doubt, and that is *thought*. If on the one

<sup>1</sup> See his first "Meditation," in which Descartes gives the reasons why we ought to doubt of the truth of things generally, and the uses of doubting.—N.B. The references are made to the convenient 12mo edition of M. Jules Simon. Paris: 1844.

<sup>2</sup> See his answer to Hobbes, p. 186.

hand I admit a truth, I admit it by means of my power of thinking; or, if on the other I doubt it, the very act of doubting implies the same power, inasmuch as to doubt is to think; so that no scepticism, however rigid, can by any means deny this one fact without destroying itself. Whilst, however, we are constrained to admit thought as *the first* veritable fact, we cannot but see, at the same time, that there is *a subject* to which this phenomenon belongs, and a subject, moreover, which is conscious of its own states. We conclude, therefore, that Being, intelligent, conscious Being, is implied and postulated in thinking; a truth which was expressed by Descartes in the celebrated sentence, “Cogito, ergo sum.”<sup>1</sup> Few philosophical aphorisms have been more frequently repeated, few more contested than this, and few assuredly have been so little understood by those, who have held up its supposed fallacy to the greatest ridicule. Had Descartes intended this aphorism to be in the proper logical sense an argument to prove our own existence, there is no doubt but that it would be chargeable with a “petitio principii.” Such an intention, however, he distinctly disclaims in his reply to Gassendi, and explains his meaning to be simply this,—That the very moment there are phenomena of any kind within our consciousness, that moment the mind becomes cognisant of its own existence; and that were there no consciousness there would be no possible evidence of the existence of an intel-

<sup>1</sup> *Vid.* Second Meditation, in which his first principles are laid down.



ligent principle. From this it is clear that the "Cogito ergo sum" of Descartes is intended to be nothing more or less than an appeal to consciousness. The question was, where am I to find the first ground of certainty—where the fundamental truth which underlies every thing else? The reply of Descartes is,—You must find it in the veracity of your consciousness. You *think*, and what does thinking include? Manifestly a subject and an object—a thinking being and thought itself. By the very first act of consciousness, therefore, *the me* takes possession of, and affirms itself.

Not only is the fact of our own being, however, implied in our consciousness, but from the nature of thought, Descartes considered we could legitimately conclude respecting the nature of the mind itself; that, as the one possesses no resemblance to any of the qualities of body, the other also must be of a corresponding essence. The mind itself, therefore, he regarded as simple and spiritual in its nature, totally distinct from matter in every possible point of view.<sup>1</sup>

A foundation being thus laid, Descartes proceeds to erect his philosophical system upon it. The

<sup>1</sup> For Descartes' views on the immateriality and immortality of mind, see his second Meditation, and his Dispute upon it with Cassendi. These two of his writings have the merit of placing the doctrine of the spirituality of mind upon its firmest foundation. Consult on this subject Damiron's "Essai sur l'Histoire de la Philosophie au xvième Siècle," chap. iii. Mr Hallam also awards him the honour of being the father of modern spiritualism—"Lit. of Europe," vol. ii. p. 442. His material theory of Memory or Imagination, however, shows the influence which the current materialism of the age still had upon him.

3. With regard to some of the most important problems of metaphysics and morals, phrenology has never attempted any solution at all.

Suppose, for example, that in place of Dr Reid, some ardent phrenologist had set himself to oppose the advancing scepticism of David Hume. How would he, in the outset, have grappled with the ideal, or, as we would rather term it, the representationalist system, which lay at the base of the whole controversy? Once shake man's confidence in the reality of his sense-perceptions, and it is not, neither can it ever be, in the power of a philosophy, which is built entirely upon external observation, to venture a single reply to any of the objections which the sceptic may have to offer. If our senses themselves deceive us, of course it will not do to trust the very observations upon which all phrenology is based. We strongly suspect that in such a dilemma the phrenologist would be glad to take refuge in the citadel of *common sense*, or some such reflective principle, and leave his developments to fight an easier battle.<sup>1</sup> Again, what can phreno-

<sup>1</sup> Nowhere is the insufficiency of phrenology as the basis for a *philosophy* seen more clearly than here. All the most important principles of human knowledge have to be either assumed, or borrowed by it from metaphysical writers. Nothing is clearer than that the senses *alone* could never originate knowledge, were there not a *rational* element to react upon them. Could we have ever *known*, for example, anything of the moon and stars by the senses only?—would not sensation have led us here utterly astray from the truth? Just so it is with everything else. Mere sensation can never be the basis for a philosophy; and yet phrenology either sets out with it as a sufficient guide, or takes for granted the whole of the *a priori* element,

logy say in the great dispute respecting cause and effect, and the belief we derive from thence in a great first cause, the Author of the whole creation? Against the argument of Hume, that our notion of cause, and our confidence in the regularity of nature, are simply the results of association, it has nothing to bring forward except the fact, that we have an organ of causality, upon which such a belief is grounded. But to this it might be replied, how have you discovered this organ of causality, and why do you assign such a function to certain of the anterior lobes? The only possible answer on the part of the phrenologist is, that he has observed the idea of causality really to exist in the human mind, and assigned it, by due observation, its place upon the map of the skull. It turns out after all, then, that we must fall back upon a purely mental analysis, and without any further evidence, suppose this analysis to be correct; so that the real argument of the phrenologist is a complete circle, the truth of the mental analysis verifying the organ, and the organ, in its turn, verifying the truth of the analysis. In all this there is really not one available step taken in analysing our idea of causality; we are not an inch nearer any discovery of the ground upon which our confidence in a first cause reposes, nor can our belief in it be even, to an infinitesimal

which alone can cause it to result in *knowledge*. Phrenology itself must be grounded in fundamental philosophy, and cannot therefore be a substitute for it.

degree, more clear or certain than what it becomes by the introspection of our own consciousness.

It is useless to enumerate particularly the other problems, which have most taxed the powers of the metaphysical analyst ; but just in the same manner it might be shown, that upon the question of the spirituality of the mind ; upon such notions as those of time and space ; upon the great idea of infinity with all that it involves ; upon the personality or non-personality of the human reason ; upon the absolute or relative character of human knowledge ; that, in brief, upon all such fundamental points in metaphysics, phrenology sheds not a single beam to aid us in the research. The only thing it attempts is to ridicule the questions themselves, which is a method of treating them equally easy and ignoble.

If we turn from metaphysical to ethical philosophy, the same aptitude at eschewing, rather than solving difficulties is visible in the whole proceeding of phrenology. Upon the fundamental question of human liberty (the very first condition on which the possibility of our being moral and accountable creatures rests), phrenology has *nothing* whatever to advance. It neither determines how far we are free agents, nor how far we are bound down to the law of necessity, but leaves the whole subject standing exactly where it was, before the light it lays claim to broke in upon the world. The same complaint follows us if we consider the two great problems of moral philosophy : first, what is con-

science? and, secondly, what is virtue? Conscience, according to phrenology, is the combined action of benevolence, veneration, and conscientiousness. But on what ground, we ask, is morality made to depend upon the approbation of these three organs more than on any other? Are not all the organs as well as these three equally a part of our nature? Why may not the approbation of secretiveness, acquisitiveness, destructiveness, or of self-esteem, be as good a test of what is right as that of the three organs just mentioned? Or on what principle, if any, is *their* especial superiority maintained? The only reply we have to such questions is, that these emotions are *felt* to have a commanding authority conferred on them, and that we can give no other account of the order of our nature, except that it has pleased God so to constitute us. After all the boast, then, about organs, as affording a clear foundation on which to erect a system of moral philosophy, it appears that we must still have recourse to our inward consciousness, in order to tell us which organs possess a moral authority, and which do not. The very point of the difficulty, therefore, is here untouched. We are simply told, consult your consciousness, and you will find what is right or wrong, —a maxim which was often enjoined long before phrenology dawned upon mankind. With regard to the other question, what is virtue? the case is very similar with the last. The whole difficulty of the matter is evaded by saying that the ground of morals is neither utility, nor the will of God, nor the

approbation of conscience *alone*, but all these conjoined; so that all the benefit which phrenology confers upon us in this dispute is to patch the other theories together, and make a composite one infinitely more untenable than any of the other three.<sup>1</sup>

We repeat, therefore, in conclusion, what we have already urged, that phrenology ought to have taken its place as one branch of physiological investigation; that, viewed in such a character, it has succeeded in educing many interesting and valuable facts respecting the material changes which accompany the exercise of thought and feeling; but that, in attempting to take its stand as a system of intellectual philosophy, it has entirely mistaken its proper place, and totally failed in throwing any light whatever upon moral or metaphysical researches.

Here, then, we shall close our observations upon the non-materialist class of sensational physiologists, and proceed to consider that complete development of sensationalism which has been exhibited to the present age in the writings of professed MATERIALISTS.

To clear the way for this, we shall just take a glance at the history of materialism in England after the time of Hobbes, and attempt to discover, in this way, the different phases it has assumed. In 1665, a treatise was published in London, under the

<sup>1</sup> These explanations of ethical questions on the principles of phrenology are taken from Combe's "Moral Philosophy."

signature of R. O., in which the doctrine of materialism, and man's natural mortality, was sustained on the ground more especially of certain theological opinions which the author had adopted. At the commencement of the eighteenth century, Zachary Housel, one of the French refugees, published a defence of materialism in a kind of colloquial form, for which he was prosecuted and tried at the Old Bailey. About the same time some tracts were published by Henry Layton, a barrister-at-law, in which the natural mortality and homogeneity of man were argued with great acuteness. A similar attempt was made by Dr Coward, who published, in 1702, a work (which was condemned and burnt) entitled, "Second thoughts concerning Human Soul, demonstrating the notion of Human Soul, as believed to be a Spiritual and Immaterial Substance, united to Human Body, to be an Invention of Heathens, and not consonant to the Principles of Philosophy, Reason, or Religion." In 1757 another physician, Dr Robinson, published a treatise precisely of a similar nature, which thus completes a list of five authors between Hobbes and Priestley, who supported materialism chiefly upon theological grounds.

Priestley revived the *philosophical* materialism of Hobbes, supposing, in common with that author, that our very ideas are material essences; while Darwin went forward with the superstructure, until he laid upon it the top stone, an account of which we have already furnished in the second chapter of

this work. From that time almost to the present hour, nothing of any importance has appeared either on the part of theological or philosophical materialism. A few experiments like those of Darwin have been made occasionally by naturalists, and here and there a second-rate writer of the theological school has appeared, who has followed in the footsteps of the five above mentioned ; but, upon the whole, we may consider the controversy to have rested virtually in one and the same position since the reply of Brown to Darwin's "Zoonomia." In the meantime, phrenology has prepared the way for another phase of materialism, which now manifests itself through the writings of Drs Elliotson and Engledue, and in its connexion with mesmerism, is regularly advocated in the pages of the "Zoist."

The principles of this school of cerebral physiology are very clear and very simple. According to their view, the sole object of human research is *matter*; the term mind is a mere fiction, under which we hide our ignorance of certain recondite physical operations ; to speak intelligibly, the only mind which man possesses is the brain ; thought is nothing more than cerebration ; and the highest qualities, both of the intellectual and the moral feelings, nothing but the direct result of a superior organisation. These results are sustained by an abundant appeal to our ignorance of any spiritual principle ; by a reference to the progressive development of the nerves and brain in the different gradations of animal life ; and, lastly, by the startling



facts which are presented upon the subject of animal magnetism.<sup>1</sup>

The three phases of materialism, then, which modern times present, are, according to the above statements—1, that of the theologian; 2, that of the naturalist; 3, that of the cerebral physiologist. Into the theological argument it is not our place to enter, since it rests upon scriptural rather than philosophical grounds. With regard, however, to the philosophical phases of materialism, there are a few considerations we have to present, which may place the question, at least to some minds, in a clearer position than that in which they have been accustomed to view it. These considerations refer to two points; first, to the *method* of philosophical research; and, secondly, to the *results*. Both the naturalist and the phrenologist, in so far as they uphold the doctrines of materialism, appear to us to be involved in much confusion, as it regards each of these points of inquiry. The whole discussion may perhaps be reduced to these two fundamental questions—1st, Whether intellectual science must be confined to the observation and classification of outward facts, or whether it must not ultimately rest upon the ground of our inward consciousness; and, 2dly, Whether there is really any evidence for holding the spirituality of mind, or whether matter must be regarded as the ultimate principle of thought and feeling. Whatever facts of a material

<sup>1</sup> For a clear statement of this system of materialism, see Dr Engle-due's lecture before the Phrenological Society of London. (Ballière.)

nature may be evolved by physiological research, still these two problems will equally remain to be discussed upon purely metaphysical grounds.

And first, with regard to the method of philosophical investigation, materialists frequently argue in the following manner :—The human mind, whatever its essence, is originally a blank ; by its contact with the outer world, it gains sensations and ideas. All knowledge, accordingly, comes through the senses—is the result of organic changes ; and consequently all intellectual philosophy must be the result of observation and experiment. To study man, as well as anything else aright, we must simply observe the facts connected with the nervous system which present themselves to us by means of our sense-perceptions ; all reasoning, therefore, upon inward consciousness in the philosophy of man, is to be given up, as being productive of nought but uncertainty and confusion ; and intellectual science, if its facts fall not under the observation of the senses, is to be regarded as a mere imaginary province, lying quite beyond the true region of human knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

Now admitting, for a moment, that all our knowledge is gained by means of observations made upon external phenomena, how is it, we would ask, that our observations are to be classified, arranged, and formed into those general principles of which knowledge, properly so called, alone consists. Iso-

<sup>1</sup> This was virtually the principle of Hartley and Bonnet, and professedly the principle of Cabanis, together with the French and English school of materialism.

lated facts will never raise up a superstructure of valid science, unless they are linked together by some fundamental conception ; neither will the observation of such facts, in any sense, bear the name of philosophy, unless they are pursued with a definite aim before us, and all made to tell upon the elimination of certain general truths. Sensationalists of the extreme school are apt to forget that there is a logic of *induction* as well as *deduction*, having rational axioms at its foundation ; and that without these axioms, or at any rate without the truths which they embody being in the mind, the outward observation whereon they so firmly rely would be altogether nugatory. When the astronomer, for example, describes the eclipses which are to take place within the next year, upon what does he ground the certainty of his observation ? Not upon *experience*, for that can only refer to the past ; not upon mathematical reasoning only, for that has to do simply with abstract and necessary relations. He grounds it upon the confidence he feels in the regularity of the laws of nature ; a confidence which arises from the constitution of our own minds, and is verified as a philosophical fact only by reflection upon our inward consciousness.<sup>1</sup>

Again, on what principle does the materialist himself investigate the phenomena of organisation, which he would fain substitute for those of our consciousness ? Does he really do nothing but observe

<sup>1</sup> See our remarks upon this point in the section on David Hume.

facts? And, if he were confined to this, could he ever boast a single scientific result? No; so far from that, the moment he commences, as a physiologist, to investigate the functions of the animal frame, he shows that he is acting upon an *a priori principle*, a principle not derived from observation, but one upon which, in fact, the validity of all observation rests. There is a conviction in his mind prior to all actual research, that every organ which may be laid bare by the scalpel, performs a certain function, and has a final cause. Were the anatomist, neglecting this, merely to record *what he sees*, and to put down facts in their isolation, physiology as a *science* could never exist. The bond which unites his facts into a veritable branch of science, are certain fundamental axioms, whose office is to show the causal connexion, which those facts have with each other. To admit such a connexion, the physiologist has no scruple; it forms, indeed, the very method of and incentive to his labour; and yet, while he is pressing forward without a doubt as to his plan, he appears often quite blinded to the fact, that he is acting upon a purely *a priori* principle, which nothing but consciousness could ever reveal, and the truth of which can only flow from the validity of the subjective laws of our nature. There is neither an organ nor a function which he observes, respecting which he does not profess a certainty, that it has a cause and an end, even though both should be completely unknown; and upon this conviction he does not hesitate to proceed on-

wards in his research until they shall both be discovered.

“The improvement of physiology,” remarks Dugald Stewart, in some observations upon Cuvier’s researches, “is to be expected chiefly from the lights furnished by analogy; but in order to follow this guide with safety, a *cautious and refined logic* is still more necessary than in conducting those reasonings which rest on the direct evidence of experience.” And again, M. Jouffroy beautifully remarks, in his Preface to Stewart’s *Moral Philosophy*:<sup>1</sup> “Nature is a drama of which *reason* only teaches the plot. To the eye of sense the world of phenomena is merely an ever-varying collection of isolated facts; a spectacle which has no significance. Its mystery is unfolded to us by reason alone, which reveals in every phenomenon the consequence and the principle of another; and in the aggregate of all phenomena, an immense chain of causes and effects, of which universal order is the admirable result. And such is the simplicity of this revelation, that it is entirely comprised in the conception of the absolute law of every phenomenon; a conception apparently trivial, but, in fact, most fruitful and sublime. This conception is the fundamental axiom in all the sciences of facts, the torch which guides their researches, and the soul which animates their method; the procedure of the physiologists in the study of the phe-

<sup>1</sup> See the “Students’ Cabinet Library,” vol. vi. p. 47, in which the whole subject of psychological research is admirably treated.

nomena of life, is derived from it as a natural consequence.”<sup>1</sup>

Let the ardent advocate of mere objective knowledge, then, consider, that, however extensively he may build his conclusions upon outward facts, yet there are *subjective* principles, upon which he must necessarily proceed, on which the whole superstructure of his scientific research, whatever branch it be, must be erected, and without which his knowledge would be all disjointed, and his real progress impossible. However eagerly the mind may go forth for a time to grasp the varied forms of nature, yet there will, assuredly, arrive a period when the objective movement will have run its length, when the soul's centripetal force will begin to react, when the great subjective movements in which the whole of man's activity originates will come forth to light, and when intellectual philosophy will resume the position, from which it has been ejected.

The attempt of the naturalist to account for the phenomena of thought and feeling by outward observation, is much on an equality with that of the phrenologist to localise the faculties, by merely observing certain visible developments. In the latter case we showed, that the very classification aimed at was supposed to be already made, and that we *must* have observed the various faculties in all

<sup>1</sup> To see this subject more fully discussed, the reader is referred to Whewell's "Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences."

their peculiarity before any local position could possibly be assigned them. In the same manner must there be to the physiologist a firm conviction and a clear conception of all our various mental operations, before the very notion of finding their physical causes could be entertained.

In brief, the result of these considerations is this:—There are two classes of facts equally certain and equally clear, those, namely, of outward observation, and of inward consciousness, which can never be resolved into each other, but which must both form the materials of true philosophical research. If we take the external world alone as our starting-point, we can never deduce from it the phenomena of mind, *i. e.*, we can never succeed in showing how the properties of matter can possibly be compatible with, or lead to, thought, feeling, and reasoning: and, on the contrary, if we start simply upon the facts of consciousness, allowing *that* only to be real which is deduced rationally from them, we can never succeed in getting beyond the circle of our own subjective being, so as to prove, by logical inference, the existence of a world without. Self, with its pregnant consciousness, is one world; nature, with its varied changes, another—each resting upon its own evidence: but, as all knowledge is *subjective*, *a priori* principles must lie at the basis even of physical science, while physical science, in its turn, may in some of its branches throw light upon the workings of mind in its present close relation with the material world. The ques-

tion, then, as to the real nature of the "*philosophy of man*," we consider, can admit but of one rational reply, namely, that the physiologist and psychologist have their own separate sciences, their own separate facts, and their own separate conclusions; that both proceed on sure grounds, and may evolve in their own department sure results; but lastly, that the one of these branches may often be employed to throw light upon the other.

We now proceed to the other, and the far more difficult point of dispute between the materialist and the immaterialist, namely, what is the ultimate principle of thought in man? is it homogeneous with matter? or, is there a mind essentially distinct? Now, first, there is not much difficulty in exploding the vulgar appeal to common sense, by which the more shallow and thoughtless materialist attempts to shake the ordinary belief of humanity in a thinking soul distinct from the body. He says, (in an argument which, in fact, begs the whole question,) show me the mind; point it out to the perception of any of the senses; prove to me in this way that the belief in it is not a mere delusion; give me the same strength of evidence for its existence, as I can furnish you for the existence of matter, and I am content. We reply, what is your evidence for the existence of matter? You talk about touching and seeing it, but what is it that sees, and what that feels? Is it the brain? If so, *prove* it on your own principles. Show me any physical process—any action of the nerves, or com-



motion in the cerebrum, that corresponds with a sensation or with the judgment, that I have an external object now lying before me. Where is the analysis of matter, however refined, which has resulted in a thought or a feeling ; or, who has traced the action of the nerves up, step by step, until he has come palpably and sensibly to an emotion ? You know of the existence of matter simply because you *feel* that it exists ; but that feeling is purely a fact of your inward consciousness, which upon *your* principles, has no certainty or reality about it. Be consistent at once ; give up everything as veracious which has not external evidence ; and give up, therefore, the inward feeling upon which your confidence in a material world rests.

If the materialist rejoins, that the various feelings and judgments, of which we are conscious, are mere phenomena, which need not imply the existence of an invisible *spiritual essence*, we also rejoin, that hardness, or extension, or size, are merely phenomena which need not on the same ground imply a real *material essence*. Whether we regard the properties of body or mind, the subjoining to them of an essence or substratum is equally a process of *pure reason*, and the result is, a judgment or belief which in one case is no more certain than the other. The one says, I *must* believe in matter, and there is an end of the discussion ; the other says, with an equally final decision, and I, too, *must* believe in mind : in both cases alike there is a falling back upon the evidence of consciousness. The appeal

to common sense, then, is altogether retortable, and leaves the whole question *in statu quo*; both matter and mind resting on exactly equivalent evidence, be it sufficient or insufficient.

Now, as the whole discussion respecting the immateriality of mind has from its very nature been most fruitful in misunderstanding and logomachy, let us see in what the combatants, ordinarily speaking, really agree and in what they differ. With regard to the facts of consciousness, which we term thought, feeling, will, &c., there is no dispute; all admit that we do think, that we do feel, that we do will; to deny this would imply a mere play upon words, which it were not worth while to notice or refute. Again, both parties admit certain facts relating to the physical conditions of thought or sensation. They admit that we have a nervous system, that this is affected by impressions from without, that it has its centre in the brain, and that there is a certain action of the brain, either in whole or in part, corresponding with all the manifestations of intelligence or feeling. Now, these things being admitted, we pause, and ask—are there any more facts, beside those we have mentioned, to which either party can appeal? The facts of physiology are granted on the one side, those of consciousness are granted on the other, and this is all, *absolutely all*, that any one can possibly know from direct observation, whether it be external or internal. The point, then, at which the materialist and the immaterialist commence their diverging courses, is just

where they have run the full length of actual observation, and begin to reason or to theorise upon what they observe.

The material physiologist reasons thus :—Here is a wonderful piece of organisation, the human body, producing the most extraordinary operations. Here is the stomach, which performs the functions of digestion ; here the liver, which secretes the bile ; here the brain, which produces thought and emotion. If we injure the stomach or the liver, we disturb the processes which they were intended to carry on ; and so, if we injure the brain, it is found, that we equally affect the processes of thought and feeling. In the two former cases we assign nothing beyond the material organs as necessary to give the observed result, and why, then, should we assign anything beyond the brain as necessary to account for the phenomena of mind ? Let us find out what matter *can* do, before we begin to say what it cannot. The spiritualist, on the contrary, reasons upon the same facts in a different strain. Here are thoughts, feelings, volitions, he urges, which have nothing in common with material changes, nothing with chemical processes ; and what can the entire difference observable in the phenomena (which in the former case we cannot *conceive* to result from the mere collocation of material particles) indicate to us, but another and a spiritual substance, which we term mind ?

Our consciousness only comes in direct contact with *phenomena* in either case. Matter is

that unknown something which has extension, impenetrability, &c. ; mind is that unknown something which has feeling, thought, volition. To say that *mind* is *matter* is to say, that what we know by one set of properties is the same thing as that which we know by another set. If we can only know matter by phenomena—this affirmation involves a contradiction in terms ; but if, on the other hand, we contend that we can imagine, by an abstraction of the reason, a material essence to lie at the foundation of both series of phenomena—this is simply an hypothesis.

It appears, therefore, that these two explanations are in fact both of them *hypotheses*, either of which may be made to account for the facts of the case, but which we have to judge of in the absence of actual demonstration according to their relative *probability*. The dogmatical assumptions of absolute certainty so common on either side, as also the contemptuous imputations of absurdity, must be given up by the calm inquirer, and he must regard the case, *when viewed simply by the light of the understanding*, as one which at present can only rest upon probable evidence. The whole of our attempt, then, in the present instance, is to estimate probabilities, which we shall accordingly do as carefully as possible.<sup>1</sup>

Against the materialist hypothesis, then, there

<sup>1</sup> We shall show soon, that upon a higher or transcendental principle of philosophy, the question of materialism and spiritualism assumes a very different form.

are various objections, which appear to every mind stronger just in proportion as it is less under the influence of the senses, and more under the influence of pure reason.

1. There is usually among this class of thinkers an entire neglect of the notion of *power* or *force*. We contend, that whenever changes take place in the material world, we have a distinct idea of power exerted in the production of the phenomena, over and above the mere co-existence of the objects. Any two material bodies, we know, tend to move towards each other; this is all we actually understand about the phenomenon; and we express our partial knowledge, and at the same time hide our ignorance, by saying that it takes place by the *law of gravitation*. But the *law* of gravitation, it is clear, cannot move a world or a particle; to do this requires *force*; neither can we possibly divest our minds of this notion, when we see hard, dull, inanimate matter, hurled through space, and made to perform complicated and harmonious revolutions. All *causes*, then, as implying power, are spiritual in their nature; we cannot possibly reduce them to the idea of matter; in fact, we never conceive of any force producing change, except under the type of the exertion and energy of our own will moving the material particles of our bodily frame.<sup>1</sup>

The existence of efficient causes, we are well aware, is very widely disputed; but in addition to

<sup>1</sup> This is clearly and forcibly stated by Sir John Herschel, in his "Preliminary Discourse," p. 86.

their reality being distinctly asserted by the most philosophical minds of the age, we cannot but think that their truth is tacitly admitted by the whole spirit of physical research ; to wit, by the perpetual effort that is made to discover *the process*, which goes on between any antecedent and its consequent. Take the case of digestion as an illustration of the principle we are affirming. The stomach is the organ or instrument in this process ; but no one can suppose that it is *the cause*. There must be some *chemical force*, whose operation we very imperfectly understand, by which the change denoted by digestion is accomplished ; and even if we were to get one step nearer than we are to the “modus operandi,” we should still look for another yet more recondite, and so on, until we had attributed the “primum mobile,” to a force of a purely spiritual kind. Universally, the *knots* or *joints* which unite phenomena are the grand subjects of physical investigation ; it is here that we find more subtle essences in operation ; here we discover new processes ; neither will our reason permit us to rest until the senses are baffled, and we are obliged to admit the real existence of a power, which is, indeed, beyond our perception ; but *rationaly* cognisable by its effects. Materialists, from the habit they contract, of admitting nothing beyond what is visible and palpable, are ever in danger of confounding the *organ* of a function with the *cause*. They say, for example, that it is the stomach which digests, and the liver which secretes bile ; which,

in fact, is saying nothing at all beyond the fact, that these are *localities* in which such operations are carried on : but as to the principle of these operations, we must look for a *power* to which nothing material has the slightest resemblance, and the secret nature of which it is pretty certain we shall never fully understand in our present state of existence.

From the functions just mentioned, let us now turn to the functions performed by the brain. Here we see, that in connexion with certain changes in the particles of the cerebrum, we experience thoughts, feelings, emotions, joys and sorrows, peace or excitement. The materialist says, that these molecular changes, or rather the various states of brain consequent upon them, and termed by him *cerebration*, *are* thoughts and feelings : but there is here an evident confounding of the instrument with the cause. Power there must assuredly be, in order that the prodigious effects of mind may be produced ; for, to say nothing of the intellectual features of the case, there must be some force exerted, when the particles of the cerebrum, of the nervous system, and of the sinews of the muscular frame, are thrown into movement. The only difference between this case and the former ones is, that in those purely physical operations, the force employed, as far as our observation goes, is perfectly recondite, that it acts without our perception, although, indeed, we can easily observe its effects. On the other hand, mental force is an object of

direct consciousness ; it is, in fact, the only force respecting which we have any knowledge of its mode of operation, and thus becomes the type by which we conceive of all other forces existing in nature.

We observe a movement in the digestive organs, and digestion is the result. We know that some power must have been in operation, but we do not comprehend in what its nature consists. So, also, we observe a movement in the cerebral particles, and muscular movement follows ; but here, unlike the former case, there is a *conscious* force, that of the will, which we feel to have been the more remote cause of the whole phenomenon. In brief, wherever we see change or motion, there we necessarily imagine some power adequate to the production of the effect. In digestion there is the digestive *power*, in animation there is the vital *power*, both known to exist, but unknown in their nature, except so far as it may be gathered from their effects. In the case of mind, then, we observe as effects, thoughts, feelings, emotions ; and on the same principle we attribute these to a thinking power, a feeling power, and an emotive power, of which we are personally conscious, and which, whatever it may be, we term mind or soul in its various manifestations. *We conclude, therefore, that if all causes, of whatever nature, are spiritual, mind being a conscious and intelligent cause can lay, of all others, the first claim to have the notion of spirituality attached to it.*



If it be said that this view of the case would assert the existence of some spiritual essence wherever phenomena take place, and wherever power is displayed in nature, as well as in man, we admit the inference. All natural phenomena bear upon them the impress of a *divine spirit*. My own finite effort I attribute to the agency of my own finite mind, the infinite power that acts around me I attribute to the presence of the infinite mind. God is revealed in every natural phenomenon, as surely as self is revealed in every effort of the will. The one idea of spontaneity, personality, will, as the centre of movement and the source of power, is that which will for ever baffle both the materialist and the atheist ; it contains the germ of that belief which humanity ever has felt, and ever will maintain, in a *soul*, and in a *God*.

2. From what we have just said, it follows that materialists, in assigning a bodily organ as the principle of mind, do *not* give so clear an explanation of the facts of the case as those who hold the existence of spirit.

Here are certain intellectual phenomena, which all admit ;—it is required to know how they come into existence. The materialist says, they are the direct result of certain movements in the brain. But this, in fact, is only evading the real question. How is it, we would ask, that the brain is subjected to these movements, and what is the force employed in producing them? The materialist gives no satisfactory answer to this question, while the

spiritualist assigns a real power or cause, which is amply equivalent to the observed effects. Both must admit a power of some kind; if the lobes of brain, for example, which subserve the faculty of memory, reasoning, or comparison, are excited, there must be some force or other employed; the one, accordingly, attempts no explanation of it; the other gives an explanation which, even though admitted hypothetical, is nevertheless highly probable and satisfactory.

3. The system of materialism, particularly that form of it, which assigns different functions to the various portions of the brain, does not even attempt to explain the psychological phenomena of the *will*. The operation of all the various organs is manifestly under some superior control. There is a power which either excites or represses the working of the faculties, and which is not at all taken into account by those, who regard the cerebrum as *an assemblage* of such faculties bound together by no perceptible tie. The will, to which we attribute this power, is an untiring energy, unimpaired either by labour or disease. Continued thought is always exhausting, and the indulgence of emotions is exhausting also; both of which facts would indicate that each of these processes is carried on by a material instrumentality; but the will is ever the same, the sense of personality never grows weary, is never lost by any kind of physical injury; and herein it is, therefore, that we should place the essence of mind, as an ever acting and ever unwearied source of energy

and power. It should be observed, that we do not put forward these arguments as decisive of the case now under review, but merely as considerations which show that the materialist hypothesis is not so satisfactory and so capable of explaining all the facts we have before us, as it sometimes lays claim to; much less a theory which admits of those lofty pretensions to clearness and simplicity, which it sometimes assumes.

On the other hand, there are several considerations which tend much to strengthen the probability of the spiritualist hypothesis.

1. There is the *unity* which pervades all mental phenomena. However varied our thoughts, however complicated our emotions, however numerous our volitions, yet they are all referred by consciousness to one and the same individual self. To account for the unity of our conscious being is by no means easy upon the materialist hypothesis, whichever way it be viewed. Phrenological materialism, the most rational of all, is completely baffled in explaining this phenomenon; inasmuch as it is impossible to show, in what manner a conscious unity can result from an assemblage of organs, each one of which thinks or feels for itself. If it be said, that there is something common to all the organs, by virtue of which they are felt to belong to the same being, then we ask what is this something which *is felt*, or what is this being which *feels*, independently of the cerebral parts, of which the materialist supposes it to consist. If they be referred to some material point in the centre of the

brain, then this point is in fact the mind, the real self; and the brain is only the instrumentality by which it acts. Moreover, such a point, in order not to be divisible, must be an atom or a monad, and thus we are landed somewhere in the centre of the Leibnitzian philosophy, the tendency of which, when made intelligible, is to support an ideal or dynamical theory of the creation.<sup>1</sup> But if it be supposed that there is something in common actually in contact with all the organs, by virtue of which there is a felt connexion between them, then it were well to consider whether this is possible or intelligible except on the hypothesis of a spiritual principle, which manifests itself in and through the cerebral organisation. If the materialist, however, still further should take up the principle, that the whole brain thinks, just as the whole stomach digests, then we ask how can the juxtaposition of particles, not one of which has the property of thought, at length come to create it? Is there any imaginable correspondence between such juxtaposition as cause, and thoughts or pleasures or pains as effects; and can a mere movement of the brain, without any other force being implied, be rationally supposed to wield the strong and nervous muscles of the human body? The answer to this brings us to another remark in favour of spiritualism, namely,

<sup>1</sup> "Si vous admettez l'atome absolu, il faut admettre en lui la possibilité de la manifestation de la pensée sous peine de tomber dans une pétition de principes: car ce n'est que dans l'impossibilité de concevoir la pensée dans cet atome, qu'un principe d'une autre nature doit être admis." See Tissot's "Anthropologie," vol. ii. p. 353.

2. That it assigns a more adequate cause to account for the given effects.

The whole nature of mental phenomena is such, that it does far less violence to our reason to suppose that a spiritual principle is in operation within us, than to rest satisfied with the notion, that the matter itself, of which the brain is composed, can think, or feel, or of itself produce physical exertion. Where there must be an hypothesis of some kind, it is by far better to accept that, which appears most adequate, especially if, instead of straining and wrenching our fundamental notions of material properties, it offers a plain and simple solution of the facts which come before us.

The properties of matter in all its varied forms are extension and resistance; on the other hand, as far as experience goes, there is in it a total negation of thought and consciousness; and this being the case, it is only by stripping it of all which we have before known it to possess, and adding that which was never before regarded as one of its properties, that we can come to the conclusion, that matter or any combination of matter either thinks or feels.

3. The idea of the spirituality of mind better comports with the notions which mankind have ever entertained of its immortality. We would by no means represent the properties of spirituality and immortality as being so closely connected, that the one necessarily implies the other. There is nothing absurd in the notion of a material existence being eternal, or a spiritual one being perishable,

if such be the will of the Creator; nevertheless, if there be any grounds, on which to look forward to a future life, it is unquestionable that the idea of a spiritual mind better comports with such a prospect, than that of a mind which results from material organisation; and on this ground, the whole of the separate evidence for the immortality of the soul goes to strengthen the evidence for its spirituality. Putting, then, all these remarks together, we deny that there is any superior clearness in the materialist hypothesis; that it gets rid of a single difficulty; that it has peculiarly the suffrages of common sense; or that it is successful in explaining the phenomena for which we have to account. On the contrary, we affirm that the spiritual hypothesis is equally comprehensible; that it is in much better keeping with the unity of our thoughts, feelings, and volitions; that it assigns a far more adequate cause to produce the given effects; and, lastly, that it comports better with the dignity and immortality of human nature. Setting, therefore, both hypotheses before us, and estimating their relative *probabilities*, we have no hesitation in rejecting materialism, and still holding to that spirituality which we may term the common belief of mankind.

We have conducted the above argumentation on the principle of Jouffroy (Pref. to Stewart,) simply from the stand-point of the understanding, supposing the ordinary conception of matter and mind to be valid *really* as well as phenomenally. To us, however, it appears evident, that the whole tendency of

philosophy, from the time of Leibnitz, has been to bring us nearer and nearer to a purely dynamical theory of the whole universe. The idea of matter is the most dark, indefinite, unmeaning of all ideas, except we consider it in connexion with certain of its attributes, *i. e.*, as ever exerting certain *powers*. By the mechanist, matter is measured and reasoned upon simply in the light of a power; the chemist in the last analysis sees only centres of forces; the philosopher knows the me and the not-me, simply under the law of a mutual action and reaction; and even in natural theology, the only truly conceivable notion we can form of the act of creation, is that of the Divine power and thought going forth to the production of form in the wondrous processes of nature and mind. That the *phenomena* we term material must ever exist is self-evident; that they indicate a substratum is equally certain; but that the real philosophic analysis of this substratum will bring us to no other result than that of an action and reaction of forces, appears to me to amount almost to a demonstration. The universe in this light appears far more simple, more harmonious, more beautiful. Instead of a dualism encumbered with metaphysical paradox, we have an homogeneous creation, together with the activities of which it is composed, rising in perfect gradation from the lowest forms of matter, through all the regions of organic life, to the highest development of mind itself.

On these principles, power acting unconsciously and blindly, is matter—power raised to intelli-

gence and volition is spirit. The substratum of both is identical, but there exists in their most inward nature determinations which result in phenomenal differences—differences which will ever be marked and distinguished by the language of Dualism; because ordinary language is always based upon phenomena, and not upon a refined metaphysical analysis.

“The materialists and the spiritualists,” says M. Tissot, “ought in general to probe more deeply than they have done the notion of matter; they would then have been forced on either side into their last intrenchments; would have discovered the point of intersection of material and physical phenomena; and consequently the point of view under which matter and spirit resemble each other and are identical, as well as that in which they are distinguished. It is only on this condition that agreement is possible; without this, men will dispute eternally, every body being right and every body being wrong at the same time. Every one will be wrong in this sense, that he will ignore on the other side the facts which he ought to accept without restriction, and of which it would be necessary also to admit the consequences. Every one would be right in this other sense, that having laid down the exclusive point of view by which he reasons, he will come to reject necessarily every other hypothesis.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Anthropologie*, vol. ii. p. 356.



SECT. II.—*Modern Sensationalism in France.*

In the brief sketch we gave of the progress of sensationalism in France during the eighteenth century, we traced the development, and the various transformations of the philosophy of Locke through a succession of writers, who, while they popularised and adorned the school to which they belonged, by a clearness and a brilliancy of style which has been seldom equalled, and perhaps never excelled, yet shrank not from asserting and maintaining the most startling conclusions of materialism. All the mental operations were reduced by them simply to various forms of sensation; morals became a mere balancing of self-interest; the mind was regarded as the result of organisation alone, to which it was absurd to ascribe the idea of immortality; while the name of God was made synonymous with nature, or altogether disowned. These principles we followed in their course up to the period of the Revolution, which for a time absorbed the attention of every mind, bore along even the calmest thinkers with it in its fury, and allowed them no leisure, and perhaps no disposition, to reflect upon the more abstruse subjects of philosophy. No sooner, however, did the excitement of that stupendous event begin to abate, than the purely philosophical element, which had for a time been lost in the political confusion, began to re-appear, and to excite a portion, though at first by no means a considerable portion, of public attention.

There was one spot in the vicinity of Paris which may be marked out as peculiarly the cradle of the rising philosophical spirit, and in which all those, whose names hold any prominent place in these early endeavours to revive the genius of Condillac, nurtured their young attempts. It was at Auteuil that the chief promoters of these studies regularly met together, to discuss the most important philosophical problems; it was there that Cabanis, Garat, Destutt de Tracy, Volney, Maine de Biran, and others, matured, in conjunction with each other, many of the theories which made so brilliant a début in the philosophical world, and excited, to so considerable a degree, the attention of metaphysicians throughout Europe.

Without dwelling, however, upon the more general features of sensationalism in its first appearance after the Revolution, we shall proceed at once to take a rapid view of the writings of those, who gave it all its celebrity and its value. And in doing so, we cannot but remark, as somewhat a singular fact, that the four men, who not only stand at the head of this philosophy, (usually termed by themselves *ideology*,) but whose writings compose almost the whole of the accredited works of that school, were born, two of them in the same year, and the other two within a very short period before or after. Cabanis and Volney were born in the year 1757, Destutt de Tracy in 1754, and Garat in 1758.

Cabanis, to whom we must first direct our attention, had been in his early life both a disciple and a personal friend of Condillac. Under his guidance

and tuition he had studied the philosophy of Locke, and had fully entered into the method, by which his French commentator attempted to complete it. All we know of Cabanis, therefore, before the Revolution is, that he was a professed adherent to Condillac's philosophical opinions; and that, in accordance with them, he must have regarded all the active operations of the mind simply as forms of the one great sensitive faculty. When the events of the Revolution burst upon the country, Cabanis was called to take his full share in them. He was the intimate friend of Mirabeau during his mad career; he was his physician in sickness, and conducted the examination of the body after death. Equally intimate was he with Condorcet, whose sister-in-law he afterwards married; and it is confidently affirmed that he prepared the poison, with which that remarkable and much persecuted man terminated his life. In the third year of the republic he was appointed professor of medicine in Paris, and soon after was elected member of the National Institute. The study of philosophy had always been more congenial to the mind of Cabanis than that of his own profession, and he now applied his mind to the preparation of no less than twelve different *Mémoires*, which were read at the Institute, and published in 1802, under the title of "*Traité du Physique et du Moral de l'Homme*."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A second edition was afterwards published, with tables and indices, by M. Destutt de Tracy, under the title of "*Rapports du Physique et du Moral de l'Homme*." (Paris, 1805.)

In this work Cabanis sought to complete the philosophy of Condillac, or rather to pursue that of Locke onwards, from the point at which he considered Condillac had stopped short. Locke had proved, as was *then* generally admitted, the sensational origin of all our ideas; Condillac, proceeding one step further, had shown in what manner all the various mental operations, by which our ideas are modified, such as memory, judgment, abstraction, and others, might be philosophically reduced to sensation in its various transformations. Cabanis now proposed to investigate the nature and origin of *sensation* itself, and thus to furnish a clear deduction of all our intellectual notions, as well as moral feelings, from the primary movements of our physical constitution. The result of these investigations was a theory, which from its extreme simplicity can be explained in a very few words.

The nervous system he considered to be the seat and the cause of all sensation, inasmuch as any part of the body becomes altogether insensible the very instant the nerves, which reside there, are severed from the rest of the system, of which they form a part.<sup>1</sup> When an impression is made by an external object upon any of these nerves, it is instantly conveyed to the central organ. From this a reaction takes place, by which the impression is reconveyed to the extremities. This action and re-

<sup>1</sup> Cabanis takes his primary principles for granted, without appearing to imagine the very necessity of a proof. The full statement of his views on this point, are contained in the second *Mémoire*, sec. 2.

action, he showed, must both exist, ere the sentiment or the impulse intended to be produced can take place.<sup>1</sup> The whole process, then, of our intellectual as well as of our moral feelings, Cabanis considered to be here developed with the most consecutive clearness and certainty. The moral feelings, the intellect, the will, all the various faculties and emotions of the mind, were, on Condillac's principles, clearly reducible to sensation; but sensation he now proved to be an affection of the nerves: the inference was, that it is in the nerves alone, that the whole man consists—"Les nerfs voilà tout l'homme." Such was the ultimate idea in which his philosophy terminated.

These extreme opinions excite in us the less surprise, when we consider that Cabanis had been nurtured in the materialistic school of the French Encyclopædists; so far, indeed, from seeing in him any bold attempts to carry out the principles of his masters beyond their legitimate application, we clearly recognise in the admitted reaction of the central organ a shrinking back from the hardihood, with which some had maintained the grossest aspect of materialism. We can trace, in fact, three shades of opinion amongst the physiologists of that age, respecting the origin and nature of mental phenomena. Some, like Helvetius, D'Holbach, &c., admitted nothing whatever, but a physical organism acted on by external agencies, and explained all the facts of mind by means of this passive sensibility. Others, of whom

<sup>1</sup> Mémoire ii. Sections 6 and 7.

Bichat was the representative, maintained the existence of certain vital properties, to the action of which the phenomena of the passions and the understanding are to be referred. Cabanis proceeded a step further towards spiritualism; he not only admitted certain *vital properties* in connexion with our organisation, but was forced here and there into the avowal that the principle of life is something real, *over and above the organs and their properties*.<sup>1</sup> Strange that he should have admitted a spiritual principle to account for the phenomena of life, and denied it with respect to those of intelligence! This is the more to be wondered at, as Cabanis draws out the parallel between the action of the stomach in digestion, and that of the brain in thinking. The impressions from without are the material—the food, if it may be so termed, of the brain. The properties of the brain react upon them, as the gastric juice does upon our natural food; and then we *secrete thought*. But how he can make clear the transformation of nervous irritation into thoughts and feelings—how he can imagine the phenomena of mind to be in any sense forms of organic processes, how he can instance a comparison between the shakings of a fluid and intellectual facts, as though they could be essentially the same, only regarded from a different point of view—it is left for us to comprehend as best we are able.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Quelque idée, que l'on adopte sur la cause qui détermine l'organisation, on ne peut s'empêcher d'admettre un principe que la nature fixe ou répand dans les liqueurs séminales.—Mémoire iv. sec. 1.

<sup>2</sup> See Dictionnaire Philosophique, Art. Cabanis—also an excellent critique on Cabanis by Tissot, Anthropologie, Book II. Chap. ii. sec. 2.

In the meantime, however, Cabanis was not behind-hand in supporting his theory, by collateral evidences, with great talent and ingenuity. He showed most clearly, how dependent our intellectual development and moral feelings are upon a crowd of external circumstances; how they are modified by age, by sex, by natural temperament, by food, by climate, by a hundred other things of a purely physical nature.<sup>1</sup> The argument derived from hence was manifest. The various changes of the external world, and the different states of body, it was argued, operate upon the nerves; and the nerves, in accordance with these influences, give rise to all the varieties of mental and moral constitution observable between different races and different classes of mankind. Find out, then, by observation, all the external causes by which the nervous system is influenced, and you have, at the same time, all the elements which enter into our mental or moral nature, as well as the primary source, from which all their phenomena are derived. The simplicity of this theory, the ease with which it could be grasped by all minds, however deficient in philosophical acumen, the popular elegance with which it was conveyed, all tended to give it a very extensive reputation. "The physicians," says one of his French commentators,<sup>2</sup> "accorded their thanks to

<sup>1</sup> The influence of Age upon mind, is discussed in *Mémoire* iv.; that of Sex in *Mém.* v.; that of Temperament in *Mém.* vi.; that of Disease in *Mém.* vii.; that of Habits (*régime*) in *Mém.* viii.; and finally, that of Climate in *Mém.* ix.

<sup>2</sup> Damiron—*Hist. de la Phil. de xix<sup>me</sup> Siècle*, vol. i. p. 93.

the author for the learned physiological explication which he gave them of man's moral nature; the philosophers, even those who did not adopt his theory, were delighted with the relations he unfolded between the mind and the body; the half-learned hoped by his means to acquire two sciences at once—physiology and psychology; and every one profited, or thought that they profited, by his ideas.”

Notwithstanding this success, however, Cabanis, who appears to have been an honest investigator of truth, saw reason, after a time, to shrink from his own system, and distrust his own conclusions. His views seemed gradually to veer round as he studied the subject less as a physiologist and more as a philosopher: added to this, he had too deep a sense of the sanctity both of morals and religion, to leave them open to the light esteem, if not contempt, which his own principles seemed to foster. In a second work, accordingly, which was published after his death, and which he terms “A Letter upon Primary Causes,” we find him departing very decidedly from his original notions, and manifesting a retrograde tendency towards spiritualism in all the three departments of psychology, morals, and theology.<sup>1</sup> With regard to the soul, he now asserts,

<sup>1</sup> In the year 1805, Cabanis, it appears, became intimate with a M. Fauriel, a young man, who to great abilities added an earnest love for the Stoical philosophy. Through this friendship, he appears to have been led to relinquish his sensational opinions in favour of spiritualism. The letter referred to, was published by M. Bérard in 1824, under the title “Lettre à M. F. sur les Causes Premières,” and accompanied with notes by the Editor.



that it cannot consist solely in the nervous system, but that there must be a distinct and separate existence, by which the movements of our physical constitution are regulated and rendered intelligent. In fact, he carries out the notion, which he before applied to the explanation of vital phenomena, to the phenomena of consciousness, and ends in the admission of a thinking principle, an indivisible self. The moral faculty, moreover, he now saw reason to distinguish altogether from our bodily organisation, as giving rise to an order of feelings and sentiments quite peculiar in their kind, and to which no mere sensation could offer any approach: while, with regard to religion, he enters a strong and earnest protest against the reigning atheism of his time, avowing his belief, as he expresses it, "with the great Bacon, that, in order to deny in a formal and positive manner the existence of a primary cause, we must be as credulous as those, who admit the fables of mythology and the Talmud." Perhaps there is no other writer who gives in himself so complete an illustration as Cabanis, of the diversified shades of French philosophy from the time of Condillac to the rise of eclecticism. First of all, we see him advocating the sentiments of Condillac, his friend and master; next we find him standing at the head of the materialist school, by which the opening of the present century was characterised; and lastly, in his posthumous writings, we view the germs of those truer and better principles by which materialism itself was destined so soon to be supplanted and destroyed. The literary

life of Cabanis alone would furnish us with a history, tolerably complete, of the chief metaphysical systems of France in the last and the present century.

The rise of the normal schools, and especially the formation of the National Institute in the fourth year of the republic, gave a very considerable stimulus to the study of mental philosophy, as well as the other sciences, in France. At the head of the philosophical department of the former stood Garat—a man less known as a writer, than as a most celebrated lecturer and successful supporter of Condillac's metaphysical principles. The only original source from which we can now gain any knowledge of his lectures, is to be found in the archives of the normal schools, among which there are several volumes of philosophy from his pen. His general sentiments, however, are sufficiently known, inasmuch as to him mainly is due the increased attention which was paid during the first decade of the present century, to philosophical questions in France. Of a far more cautious spirit than many of his predecessors, Garat confined his lectures to a comparatively small range of subjects. For the doctrines of ideology, properly so called, he argued with great power, and no inconsiderable depth; with a clearness not unworthy of Condillac himself, he attempted to establish sensational perception as the basis of all our faculties; and in his programme of questions to be treated of in the normal schools, he furnished a plan of philosophical investigation, as consecutive in its parts, as it was symmetrical in its whole structure. For the application, however, of these

principles to other points of great importance, we look in vain to the lessons of our author. He was too prudent either to carry out morality to self-interest, or sensationalism to materialism ; and too wise, after the scenes he had witnessed during the Revolution, to draw any inferences that might be detrimental to the re-establishment of religious faith. As Cabanis was the physiologist of his school, so Garat was the sober and cautious professor, adapting his instructions to the youthful mind, repressing their too great tendency to bold speculation, and saving the interests of morality and religion at the expense of advocating a narrowed and unimposing system of sensationalism.<sup>1</sup>

Very different, in almost every respect, was the character of Volney, whom we must regard as the *moralist* of the ideological school. Volney was a bold follower in the footsteps of the Baron d'Holbach (to whose work, entitled "*Système de la Nature*," we have already referred), and has won celebrity as an ethical philosopher, not so much from the originality or depth of any of his views, as from the authorship of a catechism, where the principles of his school were briefly and clearly digested, and which came into general use among those, who preferred the morals of infidelity to those of the Bible.<sup>2</sup> Following the opinions of that class of phi-

<sup>1</sup> The works of Garat are not easily accessible. My information on them is chiefly due to M. Damiron's "*Hist. de la Phil. en France*," which contains a brief sketch of his life and labours.

<sup>2</sup> It is entitled "*La Loi Naturelle, ou Catéchisme du Citoyen Français*," (12mo. Paris, l'an deuxième de la République.)

losophers, who saw in man nothing but an organised mass, who considered the nervous system to be the sum total of human nature, who acknowledged no existence but matter, and no enjoyments but those of sense, it was natural, nay, unavoidable, that his moral system should be based entirely upon pleasures and pains, aiming simply at the attainment of the one, and the avoidance of the other.

The fundamental idea accordingly, of Volney's moral philosophy, is *preservation*—the preservation of our bodily frame, and our other external relations, in such a degree of perfection, as to afford us the greatest amount of physical pleasure.<sup>1</sup> He knew no evil beside death, and that which tends to it; no good beside life, and the external pleasures it affords; and had no conception of moral obligation, beyond the duty of living so as to defer pain and death as long as possible, and secure as much as might be allowed of life, health, and outward comfort.<sup>2</sup> In so far as virtue, sobriety, moderation, chastity, and the like, tend to the preservation of life, and the promotion of health, he enforced their observance, and in so far as the social and domestic duties add, in the long run, to our security, peace,

<sup>1</sup> Take the following specimen of the Catéchisme,—

Q. Développez-moi les principes de la loi naturelle par rapport à l'homme.

A. Ils sont simples; ils se réduisent à un précepte fondamental et unique.

Q. Quel est ce précepte?

A. C'est la conservation de soi-même.

<sup>2</sup> Cat. chap. iv.

and tranquillity, he enjoined them as worthy our approbation and pursuit; but he considered no virtue to be a good abstracted from its influence upon our sensual happiness, and no vice to be an evil, if unaccompanied by its penalties and pains.<sup>1</sup> In a word, he regarded man simply as an animal; the whole of his moral code aimed professedly at the preservation of his animal nature; neither did he shrink from defending murder itself as a virtue, wherever it tends to our security or defence. In such a system as this, it is needless to say that the higher moral feelings were completely lost sight of; that everything disinterested was condemned as folly, and that the obligations of religion were set down as fit only for the dupes of priestcraft and superstition. In representing Volney, however, as the moralist of the ideological school, we should be far from affirming, that the rest of its supporters went similar lengths with regard to their contempt for religion, or that they would have so completely sunk every nobler feeling of our nature in the mire of selfishness. Still we have unquestionably in him a complete illustration of the morality to which sensationalism *naturally* leads; while his catechism presents an instructive specimen of that moral arithmetic which, employing pleasures and pains as the ciphers, would *calculate* all the duties and obligations of human life.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cat. chaps. vi. vii.

<sup>2</sup> Volney sums up his Ethics in the following words,—

“Toute sagesse, toute perfection, toute loi, toute vertu, toute phi-

In the writings of the three preceding authors, whom we have noticed, there are easily recognised many qualities of mind which eminently fitted them for some branches of philosophical research, and which naturally gained for them a due share both of fame and influence with the public. The close observation of Cabanis, the clear arrangement of Garat, the logical order and brevity of Volney, amounting almost to the algebraical form of expression, all gave a great force and a great popularity to the ideas they advocated; but there was yet a philosopher, living and labouring among them, who, if inferior in some other respects, still united in himself a power of analysis, a faculty of metaphysical abstraction, and an irrefragable logic, which has given him without doubt the first place among the sensationalists of his age. M. Destutt de Tracy, to whom we now refer, was of noble birth under the old régime, and brought up originally to the military profession. At the breaking out of the Revolution he entered warmly into the cause of liberty, but at the fall of the crown retired into obscurity at Auteuil, where he devoted himself chiefly to natural philosophy. Dragged from his peaceful abode during the Reign of Terror, he was thrown into prison, and there beguiled the lone-

losophie, consistant dans la pratique de ces axiomes fondés sur notre propre organisation:—

“ Conserve-toi,

“ Instruis-toi,

“ Modère-toi ;

“ Vis pour tes semblables ; afin qu'ils vivent pour toi.

some hours, when no other objects of interest were around him, by studying the processes of his own mind. On his release he became a senator as well as a member of the "Institut National," and at the restoration was raised to the dignity of a peer of France. He died in 1836, admired by all for his literary ability, his ardent patriotism, and his public virtue.

It is to M. Destutt de Tracy that the wide-spread fame of ideology is mainly due, and from his writings that its real philosophical character is almost universally estimated. There is, in the whole theory of this author, the same simplicity, the same exactness, the same clear precision, that we find in those to whom we have already referred; but there is also a power of reasoning, and a depth of thought, both in analysis and in generalisation, which gives him a right to the honour of being, *par excellence*, the *metaphysician* of his school.<sup>1</sup> One fault, however, is still apparent among his many better qualities, and that is a deficiency in the faculty of subjective observation, and a consequent indisposition to recur to the data upon which his first principles rested. Give him his data ready made, and his all-embracing logic builds you a superstructure, which seems as perfect as it is beautiful; but the truth is, perhaps, altogether lost sight of, that philosophical structures, as well as all others, must have foundations, which, if not laid

<sup>1</sup> Damiron's "Hist de la Phil." vol. i. p. 99.

firmly and cautiously, soon endanger the whole building. For first principles, M. Destutt de Tracy had recourse simply to his predecessors, following Condillac and Cabanis, the one in his psychological, the other in his physiological investigations. Having thence taken his start, he carries on his work with admirable precision, embracing every thing important as he proceeds, until you see a whole system, in which nothing seems wanting till you examine the basis upon which it all reposes.<sup>1</sup>

To illustrate, however, and justify these remarks, we shall just glance at the course of reasoning our author pursues in his "*Elémens d'Idéologie*," a work which has given its name to the system it upholds. First of all, we must premise, that the doctrine of Cabanis is there fully accepted—a doctrine which supposes all sensation to result directly from the action of the nervous system, nay, which regards the nerves and the mind as synonymous terms, the one being the physiological, the other the psychological expression for the same thing.<sup>2</sup> Next, the well-known theory of Condillac, to which

<sup>1</sup> M. Dest. de Tracy's philosophical works are contained in 2 vols., with the general title of "*Projet d'Eléments d'Idéologie*." They comprehend the *Idéologie* properly so called, a "*Grammaire Générale*" containing the theory of language, a "*Logique*" for explaining the processes of reasoning, and lastly, a "*Traité de la Volonté*." He published also a commentary on the "*Esprit des Lois*."

<sup>2</sup> *Idéologie*, chap. ii. His definition of sensation runs as follows :—"*La sensibilité est cette faculté, ce pouvoir, cet effet de notre organisation, ou, si vous voulez, cette propriété de notre être, en vertu de laquelle nous recevons des impressions, de beaucoup d'espèces, et nous en avons la conscience*," p. 39.



we have so often made allusion, is elaborately upheld, according to which, thought, feeling, and all the varieties of the moral sentiments, are but different variations of sensation. These may be regarded as the fundamental principles of the whole work, and it is in the full development of them, more particularly of the latter, that M. de Tracy has manifested the power and fertility of his mind.

In carrying out this development, he shows that the sensitive faculty, with which we are endowed as the basis of our intellectual life, is susceptible of a great variety of impressions, of different kinds and of different intensities. These impressions may be reduced to four distinct species. There are, first, those which result simply from the *direct* action of an external object upon the nerves, and which are ordinarily termed *sensations* or *perceptions*. Secondly, there are impressions, which are derived from objects not directly, but indirectly, which result not from their actual presence, but from their past action, and from the effect they have left behind them upon the nervous system: these account for all the phenomena of *memory* and *conception*. Thirdly, there are impressions produced upon us by two or more objects or sensations, that have certain *relations* to each other; which impressions, from the fact of their embodying relations, we usually term *judgments* of the mind. And lastly, there are impressions which result from certain physical feelings of want or of danger, of pleasure to be gained or pain to be avoided, and which lead

us instinctively to perform the peculiar actions by which such impulses may be satisfied. Hence result the emotions, desires, and passions, which play so large a part in the economy of human nature.<sup>1</sup> In this way the phenomena of perception, of memory, of reason, of emotion, are all reduced to the one element of sensation, and sensation itself to the action of the nerves as stimulated by the various circumstances of the external world. Setting aside the consideration that the whole theory lacks a sound basis, we cannot but admire the clearness and the ingenuity with which the author, in a small work of some 350 pages, has developed all the main points connected with the analysis of the human mind. In the first eight chapters, he disposes of the whole subject of the intellectual powers, reducing them as we have said to the one fact of sensation ; in the next three he shows the application of the principles established, to the knowledge of the properties of bodies ; and in the last six, develops the doctrine of the will, and shows the results which flow from the combination of the intellectual and voluntary phenomena in human nature.

<sup>1</sup> Nous avons déjà remarqué, que nous avons des idées ou perceptions, de quatre espèces différents. Je sens, que je me brûle actuellement ; c'est une sensation que je sens. Je me rappelle, que je me suis brûlé hier ; c'est un souvenir que je sens. Je juge que c'est un tel corps, qui est cause de ma brûlure ; c'est un rapport que je sens entre ce corps et ma douleur. Je veux éloigner ce corps, c'est un désir, que je sens. Voilà quatre *sentiments*, ou pour parler de langage ordinaire quatre idées, qui ont des caractères bien distincts."—"Idéologie," p. 37.

We shall not stop now to point out particularly, the deficiencies which the system advocated by M. de Tracy, notwithstanding all its ingenuity and consecutiveness, presents; nor attempt to show how he has passed over, or only half explained such phenomena as those of abstraction and generalisation, the power of the will and the peculiarity of the moral emotions. Instead of this, we shall rather offer a brief critique upon the ideological philosophy in general, as it appears upon the pages of the four eminent men whom we above enumerated, and to whom its celebrity throughout Europe is almost entirely due. The materialism of Cabanis, however, we must remind our readers, does not attach to ideology as a system, and therefore is more properly left out in the objections we shall now advance. The lectures of Garat, the ethics of Volney, and the logical deductions of Destutt de Tracy, will equally hold good, whatever theory we accept to account for the phenomena of sensation itself. The great problem, rather, which these philosophers attempt to work is, to adduce from sensation, as an ultimate fact, all the phenomena of our intellectual and moral life; and therefore, leaving for the present the endeavours, which some of them have made to reduce sensation to physical processes, we shall simply point out, in what respects they appear to us as a whole, to come short of any satisfactory solution of the point, upon which they have expended so much argument and ability.

1. We maintain that the French ideology does

not explain the facts of the human *understanding*. The distinction between the sense-perceptions which arise involuntarily from the presence of an external object, and those active operations of the intellect which we carry on, when quite abstracted from the world without, is so obvious, that the two have never been confounded by any, except those who have had a preconceived theory to support. Memory, it is true, may be the memory of a sensation, but it is not the thing remembered; it is the power of recalling the thing, that has to be accounted for in our analysis of this faculty, and which, especially in the case of voluntary memory or recollection, is not at all explained by terming it a prolonged sensation. A prolonged sensation would be as passive throughout its whole duration as a sudden one; in recollection, on the other hand, the mind, from a purpose and impulse of its own, casts around for every spring of association, in order to call up the notion it requires. In any case of memory, indeed, the distinction between the mere passive and receptive state indicated by sensation, is perfectly distinct from the active operation of which we are conscious in recalling a past fact of our mental history from its apparent oblivion.

Judgment, again, may involve the simultaneous perception of two objects holding a certain relation to each other, but the perception of the objects themselves, and the estimating their *relations*, are two processes altogether different. I may perceive two things to-day without passing any judgment

upon their relations, and to-morrow I may have precisely the same perception of them, and append to it a mental comparison of the two, which I am conscious, is an act, and sometimes a very complicated act, of my own understanding. Still less has the system we are considering been able to explain the more complex facts of generalisation and abstraction, and the lofty creations of imagination. That an abstract idea, or a general term, or a glowing fancy-picture, can be produced by the same means, and by the same process as the ordinary sensations we experience of actual existences around us, is intelligible on no other principle than that of an ultra-idealism, according to which the so-termed real as well as unreal world, are both alike the creations of our own subjective self.

If we pass from the consideration of our faculties, to that of our more refined notions and intuitive ideas, here, again, the impossibility of accounting for the facts of the case upon the sensational principles we are opposing, meets us with equal decision. By what means, we ask, do we acquire the notions of time and space? If we suppose them, on the one hand, to be purely supersensual ideas, then we must have some rational faculty to grasp them, inasmuch as sensation can only take cognisance of the various modifications of matter; or if, on the other hand, we suppose them, with Locke, to be abstractions from our sensations, yet still we must have the power of abstracting them, which is a process altogether

different from that of sensation itself, and one which it is impossible to reduce to the same elements. Whence, again, do we acquire our belief in the external world? If you say, from sensation,—then beware lest some sceptical philosopher, like Hume, plunge you in a sea of doubt respecting the reality of your sense-perceptions; a situation from which you are quite sure never to be extricated until you admit some principle of primary belief, or some original dictate of common sense prior to experience, from which you may gain a firm conviction, that the judgments you pass upon your sensations, respecting the material world, are valid. Further, we might inquire, from what source we draw our notions of power, of cause and effect, and some others of a similar nature. The reduction of these to the level of sense and experience, as Hume has shown by a process of irrefragable logic, would in the end reduce creation to chance, religion to folly, and all mankind to atheism. We urge, therefore, on these grounds, (and many more might be enumerated,) the incapacity there is in the ideological philosophy, to account for the most palpable *facts* of the human understanding. Physiological experience itself tells us, that when certain stimuli urge any function into operation, they may give rise to an action generically different from those stimuli themselves; and by the same analogy we can conclude that the mental excitement afforded by sensation may *possibly* give occasion to an intellectual action

which, in its nature, altogether differs from it; while actual observation raises that possibility into a sure and certain fact.

2. The sensational system we are considering, does not account for the power of the will. There is in man a source of power—a secret spring of action, of which every one is conscious, and upon the consciousness of which every one acts—that we call *self*. In whatever light we view our nature, we find such an invisible energy, which cannot be accounted for upon any mechanical principles, playing an important part in the whole of our conscious existence.

If we study man physiologically, we must necessarily suppose a self before we can account for the phenomena of muscular action, which every hour presents. Cabanis himself, as we have before remarked, although in his former publication he had denied the existence of any thing beyond the nervous system, was obliged afterwards to admit some real and distinct *unity*, without which he perceived it to be quite impossible to explain the formation, the animation, and the preservation even of our material frame. Undoubtedly it might be urged, that the influence of a kind of animal instinct may account for many of the actions of man, as well as those of the brutes; but there is within ourselves, in addition to this, a higher power, which is superior to sense, which subdues the very force of our instincts, which leads us perpetually to oppose and thwart our mere animal nature, and which, so far

from being synonymous with instinct, is possessed in an infinite variety of intensity by men of the same bodily temperament and the same natural propensities.<sup>1</sup>

If, again, we regard man as an *intelligent* being, here, also, we find the will operating in every faculty we exercise. The power of attention is nothing more or less than the will exerting itself in modifying or prolonging the trains of thought—trains which are, in fact, never left to themselves uncontrolled, except in the hours of sleep, reverie, or of mental disease.<sup>2</sup> The same voluntary energy explains the rise of many of our fundamental ideas ; it gives us all the notion we have of *power*, and consequently of causality ; it lies at the foundation of human liberty, and is therefore the corner-stone of all moral responsibility. Of this great agent in our conscious existence, sensationalism, as held by the philosophers now under our consideration, can render no account. M. Destutt de Tracy, indeed, affirms a liberty in man, which he terms the *power to act*—that is, the power of performing mechanical actions in obedience to the investigation of our ner-

<sup>1</sup> See a small Tractate, by John Barlow, A.M., "On the Connexion between Physiology and Mental Philosophy."

<sup>2</sup> Cabanis admits the fact of attention, as one of the modifying conditions of the sensational organs. "C'est l'attention de l'organe sensitif, qui met les extrémités nerveuses en état de recevoir ou de leur transmettre l'impression tout entière." Strange that he never thought of asking what the *attention* of the sensitive organ involved. Assuredly it implies something more than mere passive sensation itself.



vous system ; but this is by no means an adequate explanation of the facts of the case. Whence comes the *determination* to act upon certain fixed principles ; whence the design that points at the accomplishment of great objects ; whence the energy which, in the pursuit of its purposes, overcomes the allurements of sense, breaks down all the barriers of our propensities, and despises weariness, suffering, and death itself, in comparison with the fulfilment of the moral laws, to which it owes eternal allegiance ? Here are questions on which our author is silent—here facts of daily life, to which his whole system affords no solution.

3. We urge still further, that the French ideology does not account for the *emotions* of our nature. It commits an error in the outset by confounding our emotional feelings with those which are purely sensational. In sensation there is no intellectual action whatever ; the mind is then existing merely in a receptive state ; that is, it is simply feeling the impressions which, according to its constitution, things from without are capable of making upon it. Emotions, on the contrary, arise from some actual notion or conception, which has been formed by the exercise of the intellect, and which produces, according to its nature, corresponding feelings or impulses in the mind. Every one can easily distinguish the generic difference between the pleasurable feeling we derive from the taste of an apple, and that which we derive from the occurrence of some auspicious event ; or between the painful feeling arising

from a grating sound, and that arising from any circumstance which inspires us with fear or dread. The former class of feelings come from a material cause, and cease the instant their cause is removed ; the latter arise from our *inward* perception of something relating to our own interests, from a purely intellectual idea, involving good or evil to ourselves. These fundamental distinctions are in the philosophy now before our attention altogether confounded, and the nervous system is made so excessively and incredibly sensitive, that it can shrink at an evil, or thrill at a prospect that may be realised a year, or perchance ten years hence.

Of all the emotions, however, those which come under the province of æsthetics are the least satisfactorily explained. On the ideological principles, the emotion of beauty can be nothing more than a peculiar kind of sensation, produced by a peculiar kind of outward object. Now we do not at all deny that the emotion in question does really arise with the presence of certain objects, termed beautiful ; but if we analyse this emotion, we see that it contains an element in it quite different from that which is here supposed. We judge of beauty, whether it be in poetry, or painting, or nature, according to some internal model of perfection—some beau-ideal which exists only in our own minds ; and we term a thing beautiful or not, according to its greater or less resemblance to this standard. We never see a *perfect* model of beauty, either in art or nature, and never, therefore, perceive our beau-

ideal embodied in the beau-real; on the contrary, however lovely any actual form may be, there is ever "aliquid immensum infinitumque," some pure abstraction of perfection immeasurable and infinite in its nature, that still transcends it, and lies at the foundation of all the higher exercise of taste and fancy. Again, we say then, that the ideological school altogether fails of a theory, upon which it is possible to explain all that is peculiar to the emotions of the sublime and the beautiful.

4. We urge, lastly, that the system we are opposing does not account for the facts of our moral and religious nature. The foundation of all morality, according to these philosophers, is utility in the very lowest sense of the term; and the aim of all duty is the preservation of our physical enjoyment. These, we affirm, are the morals that are exactly fitted for an animal, which derives all its happiness from sense, and has no wish beyond the satisfaction of its bodily instincts. Viewing man in this light, the catechism of Volney is a very excellent summary of duty; and, perhaps, might lead on his theory of man to as great an amount of mere animal pleasure as could be expected in the present constitution of things.<sup>1</sup> In opposition to this, however, we contend, that to view human nature in this light, is to strip it of everything that is great or good; to

<sup>1</sup> M. Destutt de Tracy, in his "Traité de la Volonté," affirms the theory of Hobbes, that man's will or desire is his sole law; that justice and injustice exist not in the nature of things; that all morality is based upon human legislation.

banish every true virtue from the world, as far as it is bound to spring from a virtuous source; and to hasten on a result, which would end in the breaking up of every tie that holds human society together.

There are in the human mind universally two great fundamental notions of right and wrong, which are as absolute in their nature, and as impossible of being obliterated, as any fundamental axioms of man's universal belief. The fact, that men of different nations, in different ages, and in different states of mental development, have held the most conflicting notions, as to what belongs to the category of right, and what belongs to that of wrong, is no evidence whatever against the universality of those fundamental notions themselves; nay, it rather proves that they always exist, although the moral judgment may not be enlightened enough to apply them to all the practice of life. These notions moreover, are accompanied with a moral *emotion* which, while it gives us a profound admiration for what is purely disinterested, acts as an *imperative* that becomes more and more powerful, in proportion to the greater development of the moral faculty ever inciting us to the avoidance of evil, and the constant pursuit of good. The whole phenomenon of our disinterested feelings; the admiration and enthusiasm we necessarily feel in the contemplation of any lofty examples of them, an enthusiasm which rises higher just in proportion, not to the *utility* but to the *sacrifice* which accompanies their exer-

cise ; the entire absorption which such instances manifest in the rectitude of the action, to the utter neglect of the suffering which may accrue—all point us to a class of moral sentiments, to which the notion of our physical preservation has not the very slightest resemblance.

The ultimate aim, however, of these lofty and disinterested moral feelings, is fully developed only in our *religious* nature, pointing us, as it does, to a class of duties, altogether beyond the sphere of our present life, and to a destiny extending itself into the immeasurable futurity. The ideological philosophy, in the hands of Volney, was professedly an atheistical one. Instead of attempting to account for the universality of the religious emotions, it derided them ; and when it found the arguments by which their validity was sustained to be unanswerable, it deemed it convenient to enstamp all religious actions and feelings as those, which were only fit for dupes, or panderers to the profit of a knavish priesthood. To answer such arguments as these, we have neither space nor inclination, as it would be reasoning against a private hostility to religion, rather than a philosophical objection. Whatever system of religion he might adopt, unquestionably a true philosopher, who would give an account of all the elements of human nature, must not leave out, or dismiss with an incredulous smile, those deep sentiments and impulses of a spiritual kind, which have played so immense a part in the history of the world, which have given

to humanity its greatest force in every vast achievement, and lent it, as we think, its greatest glory.

The most purely abstract idea, perhaps, which we can take of man is, that he is a *force* or a *power* sent into the universe to act its part on the stage of being. The sensationalist views him as a mechanical force, created by chance, seeking simply the preservation of its organism, and accomplishing the destiny of a nature, which strange to say, never had an intelligent designer. A more enlarged philosophy views him as an intellectual and a moral force, formed by the Being who is the centre and source of all intelligence, and all goodness, and endowed for the present with an organisation adapted to the material world around him. The great aim of his being, in this view of it, is to develop more and more the intellectual and moral energy of which his real and essential nature consists; to defend the body indeed, as the organ of its present manifestation, but as it dies away, to prepare for a higher manifestation of intelligence and virtue, to which his religious aspirations had been ever tending, and where his highest desires will be ultimately fulfilled.

Before we take our leave, however, of the ideological philosophy, we must mention a far more recent effort, which has been made, both to advocate its principles, and to furnish them with additional proofs and illustrations. I refer to the works Dr Broussais published about the year 1828, one of which is entitled, "*Traité de Phy-*

siologie appliquée à la Pathologie," and another, "De l'Irritation et de la Folie, ouvrage, dans lequel les Rapports du Physique et du Moral sont établis sur les Bases de la Médecine Physiologique." These works are by no means the productions of a philosopher, but rather of a physician, who, having devoted his life entirely to the observation of pathological and physiological phenomena, discovers in them, as he imagines, the theory of all the mental and moral manifestations of which man is the subject.<sup>1</sup> In this view his aim coincides with that of Cabanis, although his ability for carrying it out was not by any means so great; and in addition to this, the style of invective in which he sometimes indulges against the spiritualists, gives to his writings a very unphilosophical aspect. To enter minutely into the various physiological theories he propounds; into his attempts to determine the seat of the different mental or moral powers; into his disquisitions upon irritation and the physical causes of madness, would require the knowledge peculiar to those of his own profession. This is, however, the less necessary, because

<sup>1</sup> Broussais' life was eventful. He was born near St Malo, 1772, and after a wild-spent youth, studied medicine at Brest. On completing his term of study, he spent some years at sea, as surgeon to various ships of war. In 1799, he went to Paris, where he prosecuted his studies with great ardour, and took his doctor's degree. Soon after he attached himself to the French army, and travelled in company with the troops of Napoleon, through the greater part of Europe. In 1814, he was appointed professor in the military hospital at Paris, where he remained till his death, which took place in the year 1838.

whatever theory may be advocated to account for such phenomena, upon physical principles, it does not by any means set us at rest upon the higher psychological questions, to which intellectual philosophy gives its chief attention. The following will give a general idea of his theory of mental phenomena. Sensation, according to the last work above referred to, consists in a circle of irritation or excitation, which traverses the human system from the brain to the extremities of the nerves. Of this irritation, sensibility is the direct result. Perception, again, is an excitation of the cerebral matter; and from this it is affirmed, all the phenomena of intellection may be shown to spring. The emotions originate in like manner,—“elles viennent toujours d’une stimulation de l’appareil nerveux du percevant.” Thus, in fact, we have in Broussais the doctrine of Cabanis modified by a peculiar theory of irritation, a theory on which he laid great stress, as being a most important discovery. In the second edition of his work on the “*Rapports du Physique et du Moral*,” Broussais avowed himself on the side of phrenology, and by combining the methods of reasoning employed respectively by Cabanis and Gall, sought to render his positions impregnable. It must be confessed, however, that in taking this course he was simply attempting to find appliances to maintain a bad cause. We have shown already, in the case of phrenology, that no analysis of our intellectual or active powers, and no valid explanation of our fundamental ideas,



can, in the very nature of things, flow from the method of investigation it adopts, inasmuch as our mental phenomena must have been already duly considered, before any relation could be observed between them and the different portions of the brain. In like manner, whatever system, different from phrenology, be employed to account for the facts of consciousness upon physical principles, still there is the same necessity for metaphysical research, before anything can be distinctly known of those mental processes which we have to explain. With regard to theories of irritations or of vibrations, or of any similar movements by which materialism is supposed to be rendered feasible or intelligible, we have seen, in our general discussion of the materialist question, that such systems at best can be but mere hypotheses; that even as hypotheses they do not account for the central force by which the vital and intellectual organs are continually put into exercise; that they in every case confound the organ itself with the real exciting cause of the various functions; and, lastly, that they totally fail in explaining the unity and simplicity of the mind, as witnessed by the daily evidence of our consciousness.<sup>1</sup>

With Broussais we may consider, that the efforts of ideology cease. Many, it is true, may still hold the principles it has supported; but none, that we are aware of, are now to be found, who are able or

<sup>1</sup> For critiques on Broussais' principles, see Damiron's "*Essai sur l'Histoire de la Phil.*" vol. i. p. 163; and, still better, Tissot's "*Anthropologie*," vol. ii. chap. ii. sec. 2.

ready to maintain them on broad metaphysical grounds.<sup>1</sup>

The most complete and able attempts which France has made during the present century to uphold sensational principles, are, without doubt, to be found in this ideological school, which we have just been reviewing. At the same time, there have been some few other manifestations of a completely different character and complexion, which, as belonging to the sensational philosophy of the nineteenth century, it would be wrong to pass by unnoticed. We must not forget, for instance, that the originator of the phrenological system, Dr Gall, though a German by birth, published his researches chiefly in the French language; and that, whatever honour may be due to the school at large, at the head of which he stands, it must be mainly attributed to the industry and intelligence with which he pursued the subject in all its different bearings. Gall died in the year 1828, leaving behind him the reputation of being an earnest and sincere searcher after truth; and though decried by many, as being grossly materialistic in his views, yet it is by no means evident that he really intended to advocate materialism, while it is quite certain that he strongly repelled the charges of fatalism and immorality, which were attributed to his opinions.

<sup>1</sup> M. Magendie stands on the side of the materialists, and has attempted to explain, on physical principles, the "*Rapports du Physique et du Moral*;" but he is entirely a physiologist, and by no means a philosopher.

Another erratic genius who shone with some brilliancy for a time in the hemisphere of French philosophy, appeared in the person of Azaïs. His object was not merely to discuss the phenomena of mind, but rather to embrace the whole universe in the grasp of his philosophical system. The Lectures he delivered about the year 1809, abounding at once with ease and elegance, gave great popularity to his opinions, which were soon further developed and discussed in three different works, entitled respectively, "Cours de Philosophie Générale," "Précis du Système Universel," and "l'Explication Universel." To give an adequate description of the theories contained in these voluminous works, would be a task by no means brief, and far from easy; but we refer the curious reader to an elaborate article in the "Journal des Débats" of the 5th of November 1824, a translation from which will be found in a Note at the end of this volume.<sup>1</sup>

The only name which we have now further to adduce as belonging to the school of French sensationalism, is that of M. Comte, whose brilliant scientific genius has raised him to the very highest rank of modern authors, and given him a reputation not confined to France, but as extensive as the cultivation of philosophy itself. M. Comte was originally an offspring of the school of Saint Simon, and in some respects has ever retained an affinity

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Note C in the Appendix.

with the doctrines of that remarkable sect ; yet his profound researches in science, and his independence of mind as a thinker, have given him a position far beyond that of a mere partisan to any system of philosophy whatever. Up to the year 1816, he was a teacher in the Polytechnic School at Paris : on relinquishing his more regular duties there, he devoted ten years of his life to the preparation of a course of lectures on *Positive Philosophy* : these he delivered in 1829, before an audience at Paris, comprehending many of the most eminent philosophers of the country, and has since re-elaborated and published.

To enter into the idea of the Positive philosophy, we must attend for a moment to the estimate which M. Comte has made of the present condition of human knowledge, as it appears upon the stage of European civilisation. All knowledge which aims at generality, he considers to be at present in an utterly disjointed state. Systems of philosophy there are in abundance, and religions more than enough, but all are for the most part in contradiction with each other, so that in matter of fact, the whole sum of knowledge they pretend to convey, is by one or another of them repudiated and denied. The reason of this confusion may be twofold. Either the mind of man may be searching for truth beyond the legitimate region of its actual knowledge, or it may not take a sufficiently comprehensive view of that truth, which really *does* lie within its grasp. The Positive philosophy essays to overcome these hindrances to the march of science ; it undertakes

to dismiss all the absolute ideas, all the *a priori* conceptions, all the theological chimæras which have fettered the human reason hitherto, and by completing the sum of the positive sciences, to rise by a purely experimental pathway at the lofty elevation of a universal philosophy.<sup>1</sup>

To establish the justice of these views upon the present state of human knowledge, and confirm our hope in the new organum, M. Comte attempts to grasp the great law of human progress—the principle by which knowledge has developed itself along the pathway of the ages. This law of progress is discovered in the fact, that the human intellect in the case of individual nations, as well as of humanity at large, passes through three distinct stages—the theological, the metaphysical, and the positive. In his more infantile and simple state, man reposes implicit faith in the supernatural; all the operations of nature have their appropriate deities, and its secrets can only be unfolded by a Divine communication. The highest form of this conception is *monotheism*, in which we see the transition from the age of theology to that of metaphysics. In the metaphysical age, the mind having elevated itself beyond the reach of superstition, regards the phenomena of the universe not as the interventions of Deity, but as implying the existence of real entities and metaphysical forces. These speculations

<sup>1</sup> Cours de Phil. Pos.—See the “Considérations Générales sur la Nature et l’Importance de la Phil. Positive.” Vol. i. lec. 1; also vol. iv. lecs. 46 and 47.

again terminate in the universal idea of nature, as the unity of those abstract agencies, which are falsely imagined to have a real concrete existence. So far, then, we see the human reason groping for truth in a region beyond the limits in which truth can be scanned.<sup>1</sup> Amidst these feeble endeavours, however, we note the rise of a scientific method, which, by the certainty of its conclusions and the brilliancy of its discoveries, stands in striking contrast with the systems we have before described. This method is *the positive*—a system of philosophy which, basing itself entirely upon palpable facts, and ignoring everything beyond them, raises itself to the perception of the *laws* of the universe, and strives to include them all under one vast but certain generalisation. All the sciences, according to Comte, invariably pass through this triple process. Some of them, such as astronomy, physics, and chemistry, have already arrived at the positive stage; others of them, such as physiology, or as it is here termed, biology, have only attained their second period of development, while the whole science of humanity (sociology) is yet in its first era—every theory hitherto propounded being hampered with the false idea of a providence and a God.<sup>2</sup>

Having thus defined and settled the limits of the human reason, M. Comte next proposes to make

<sup>1</sup> Cours de Phil. Pos. vol. i. p. 3—7, and more fully in Lectures 25 to 56.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. i. lec. ii. "Sur la Hierarchie des Sciences Positives."

our knowledge general and complete, by exhibiting the co-ordination of the sciences, and thus rising by degrees to the summit of the pyramid. The classification given us of the sciences at large, and their regular order of development, is unquestionably a masterpiece of scientific thinking, as simple as it is comprehensive. In studying the nature and relation of *facts* (for such is the whole province of the Positive philosophy), the human mind begins with those which are at once the most simple and the most general—those, namely, of *number* or mathematics. Closely connected with numerical relations, at the first remove above pure arithmetical abstractions, are those which refer to the properties of *space*—the facts with which geometry is conversant; and next above them *mechanics*, rationally considered. These, then, form together the first or lowest rank in the co-ordination of the sciences.

Having investigated the phenomena of number and space, we are in a condition to enter upon the higher investigation of *matter*, which we find appears in its most simple and least complicated form in the science of astronomy. There it is that we see the great primary laws and movements of the material universe on a gigantic and imposing scale.

Descending from this general view of the properties of matter to the surface of our globe, we next carry our researches into the department of *terrestrial physics*, in which the results are indeed less definite and general than in astronomy, but far more rich and diversified.

The fourth step brings us into the department of chemistry. Here we have to observe the still more obscure and recondite movements of physical agencies, working and interworking with each other, until we are brought up to the point, where the mere dynamical phenomena cease, and the wonders of organisation commence.

The fifth place, then, in the rank of the sciences, is Biology, a branch which includes *all* the phenomena of life, from the lowest vegetable productions up to the highest organic structure as seen in man. Here the complication and diversity of the facts presented become vastly exaggerated, and the science itself rendered proportionally difficult and tardy in its development.

The last and top-stone of this magnificent edifice is Sociology, the science of man, as he has appeared on the stage of history from remote ages to the present time. Here we arrive at the great term of human knowledge ; the chasm between the science of mind, and all the rest, is filled up ; and thus, by the completion of our positive knowledge, we rise to the attainment of ideas, which, with all the certainty of experimental truth, unite all the generality of metaphysical research. Who can fail to observe and admire the perfect harmony of truth as here exhibited ? Commencing with the most abstract region of our knowledge, we see one rank arising above the other, each diminishing in certainty and generality as it increases in richness and complexity, until the whole circuit is completed, the highest



region won, and all the sciences linked together by the harmonious order in which they are developed, by the onward march of humanity towards the completion of truth.

Such is the general outline of M. Comte's theory, which we at once perceive to be an enormous system of materialism, grounded upon great research, and supported by all the aids, which physical science, with its latest improvements, can present. All philosophy, according to this system, rests upon the observation of outward *facts*. In physics we observe the facts of the material world, in physiology the phenomena of life, and in social physics the historical facts of man's intellectual being; the great and sole object of philosophy being to classify and arrange these objects so as to discover the laws of their progress, and bring those laws to their highest possible generalisation. This, it is affirmed, has been accomplished by exhibiting the co-ordination of the sciences, and by deducing the one great law of man's intellectual development. On this system we remark—

1. Supposing the theory for a moment to be correct, and allowing that, to account for the intellectual phenomena of mankind, we have succeeded in bringing to light the threefold process above explained, still we are far from having reached a firm and satisfactory resting place. Admit that every science goes through its theological, its metaphysical, and its positive era; why, we ask, is this wonderful law of development in operation? Is it by chance

that humanity is so formed? Is it by some primæval fate that things should take such a direction? If there be a law, surely there must be a lawgiver. If there is a majestic plan by which mankind marches on to its destiny, something or other must have caused it. If history be so glorious a drama, some *mind* has certainly planned it, and watched over its execution. To eliminate a law magnificent in its results, and then to deny any intelligent principle from which it proceeded, can only be the part of determined prejudice or egregious trifling with the highest truths. But—

2. This law, so greatly extolled, has in fact only a very partial truth about it. That some of the natural sciences have passed through the three stages described, may be readily admitted, without for a moment supposing that the two former elements are intended to be eventually merged in the latter. Theology and metaphysics form as necessary portions of our intellectual life, as does positive science. Their proper sphere may become more accurately defined as knowledge increases, but never can the one be absorbed in any of the others. The reason of man ever strives, and will strive after some fixed and absolute reality; and his moral nature will ever pant after the divine. While here and there a grovelling spirit will sink itself in the earthly and material, giving itself wholly up to the life of sense, the perpetual tendency of mankind at large (and this is our highest appeal) is to seek a reality beneath the fleeting phenomena around them,

and to believe, with unwavering faith, that the world sprung from a Creator, man from a God.

3. Positivism in denying the possibility of a mental philosophy, at the same time supposes a mental theory of its own. The internal facts of consciousness do not come under those sensuous manifestations to which the positive philosopher alone appeals; the only knowledge he pretends to have of the human mind is derived either from the actions of mankind or the construction of the brain. But we would ask—is it the same thing to observe the outward actions of a man, and to consider the mental processes from which they spring? or is it the same thing to note the organs of the cerebral hemispheres, and to classify our powers, faculties, desires and emotions? To maintain this, involves a theory of mind far more untenable, as we have before shown, than that which the positivist denounces as dark and unintelligible; and even this theory itself cannot exist without the aid of those very facts of consciousness, which are so thoughtlessly disowned. External facts can never reveal to us any law or phenomenon of mind, until reflection has in our own case, made the inward world clear to our understanding, and given us a psychology to start with. The procedure of positivism with regard to psychology, therefore, is to cancel *openly* a whole world of positive facts, and then *tacitly* to admit them in the construction of its own material theory. If we are at liberty to deal with facts in this manner, any theory we choose may be easily maintained.

4. The great opposition of the positive philosophy, however, is aimed mainly against the existence of necessary truth—of absolute ideas. Here, however, we have the same spectacle repeated as in the case above mentioned; we have absolute ideas denied in one breath, and then employed in the next. M. Comte is a great mathematician; and to give a colouring to his theory he speaks of geometrical *phenomena*, as though the fundamental conceptions of mathematical truth were mere sensuous images. Space, number, time, perfect geometrical figures and ideas, all these may, indeed, be phenomena to the human *reason*, but they are phenomena which have nothing to do with the senses. The same may be said of many other conceptions. Take the idea of *law*, an idea on which the positive philosophy is itself grounded; is it not the conception of something fixed, unalterable, necessary? Take away its fixed and absolute character, and it will serve as a fundamental law no longer. Take the idea of *substance*—its denial virtually annihilates the world, and involves us in the very depths of a scepticism, against which the universal reason of mankind eternally protests. Take the idea of *cause*—and here also we find a conception, which, so long as the human *will* exists, breaks down every attempt to reduce all nature and all being to an unconnected series of individual facts. Take, in fine, the idea of *duty*, and it is there alone that we can find a basis for all the moral phenomena of humanity at large. Every system of philosophy, every abstract science,

though it should exclaim aloud against the admission of absolute ideas, yet tacitly avails itself of them as the very foundation on which it reposes.

5. Finally, even supposing the positive system could succeed in freeing itself from these charges, and could really accomplish all it professes—what would be gained by it after all—or rather, we might say, what expectations would *not* be lost. Positivism, while it seems to proffer a boon with one hand, yet with the other throws an impenetrable veil over everything which it most concerns us to know and to feel. What does it tell us of nature? Nothing. It merely points out to us a huge piece of machinery, and attempts to discover the laws of its operation; but it speaks not of its origin—of its significance—of its destination: it throws no light upon the forms of beauty it exhibits, upon the divine ideas it unfolds, upon the moral influences it conveys to that highest of all terrestrial creations—the human soul. What does it tell us of humanity? Nothing. It explains not why we exist—it tells us not whither we are tending. The problem of moral evil is left a dark and cheerless mystery; while the anticipations of the good are all buried in the sepulchre of a stern and rugged materialism. What does it tell us of freedom, of conscience, of accountability, of immortality? Nothing. Human freedom sinks into the law of a fixed and unchangeable necessity—conscience is never allowed to testify of an eternal justice to which the oppressed may ever appeal, and upon whose decisions the righteous may rely for

their ultimate vindication—wisdom and goodness, as possessed by man, cannot look beyond their own present imperfection, to a perfect wisdom, an unsullied purity, to which we are ever tending—nor can hope whisper the thought, that there is a life beyond life, that the intelligence which gazes into the dim futurity, and the aspirations which long for an eternal home, are any other than delusions—at once our glory and our curse. Finally, what does it tell us of God? Again the answer we receive is *nothing*. Formerly it was said, exclaims M. Comte, the heavens declare the glory of God; but *now* they only recount the glory of Newton and Laplace: nay, the conceptions of the atheistic astronomers of France, are declared to be far more perfect than those which the universe itself has been able to realise. “These heavens, this harmonious universe,” says M. Saisset, “which filled the mind of Newton, of Kepler, of Linnæus, with religious enthusiasm, MM. Comte and Littré consider to be imperfectly constructed; they so far forget themselves, as to say that the universe exhibits a degree of wisdom inferior to that which man possesses, and that it is easy in the detail, as well as in the whole, to conceive one far better. What! has the nature of things been so clumsy, and so little consistent with itself? has it been able to people space with infinite worlds, and make to circulate through all existence the torrents of life; and yet has it not been able to give them laws sufficiently reasonable to secure the approbation of one of its innumerable creatures?

What! can it produce the very intelligence of these two philosophers, and yet not equal it in its plans and combinations? That which MM. Comte and Littré, forsooth, conceive in their study, that which, according to their own theory, germinates in the brain of these two feeble organic machines destined to endure but for a day, is more reasonable, more beautiful, more harmonious, than the system of existence which nature realises in its eternal evolution athwart the immensity!"

With all the admiration we cannot but have for our author's brilliant scientific genius, we cannot but deplore the illusions which such minds, charmed with a theory, and absorbed in the investigation of the visible alone, gradually practise upon themselves. M. Comte admits that the stability of the solar system is absolutely necessary to the preservation of all animal existence; but instead of seeing any design in this beautiful adaptation of things to an end, he attempts to show that such stability is but the natural result of the mechanical laws, by which the heavenly bodies perform their movements; and this is his substitute for a God! But here just as much is left to account for as before; nay, go back as we may, resolving phenomena after phenomena into their simpler laws, yet there is just as much necessity as ever for us to assume the existence of a great first cause, unless we choose to subvert all the indestructible notions upon which we are obliged to act in all the practical affairs of life. Every action of the body, every effort of the mind, every volition of

whatever kind, reveals to our consciousness the notion of a spiritual power, from which the source of our own action proceeds. Starting from this inward revelation, the reason of mankind cannot gaze upon the phenomena of the universe, without assigning a spiritual power of infinite grandeur as the "*primum mobile*" of the whole. As well can we deny *self*, the cause of our own actions, as deny *God*, the cause of the *kosmos*, the universe of order around us. This first step, that of the real existence of a supreme being, the source of law, being extorted, the keystone to a system of mechanical materialism, such as that contained in the "*Course of Positive Philosophy*," is taken away; its massive structure crumbles piecemeal before the force of spiritual truth, and with it the immortal hopes and aspirations of our nature return to smile upon the path of human life.

We only quote, in conclusion, the beautiful language of a reviewer well able to appreciate the merits as well as the errors of the positive philosophy:—"Had the opinions we have been combating been maintained by those rash speculators, who are permitted at distant intervals to disturb the tranquillity of the religious world, we should not have allowed them to interfere with ours. But when a work of profound science, marked with great acuteness of reasoning, and conspicuous for the highest attributes of intellectual power—when such a work records the dread sentiment, that the universe displays no proofs of an all-directing mind,



and records it too as the deduction of unbiassed reason, the appalling note falls upon the ear as like the sounds of desolation and death. The life-blood of the affections stands frozen in its strongest and most genial current, and reason and feeling but resume their ascendancy, when they have pictured the consequences of so frightful a delusion. If man is thus an orphan at his birth, and an outcast in his destiny ; if knowledge is to be his punishment and not his pride ; if all his intellectual achievements are to perish with him in the dust ; if the brief tenure of his being is to be renounced amid the wreck of vain desires, of blighted hopes, and of bleeding affections—then in reality, as well as in metaphor, is life a dream.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The above remarks apply to the spirit of Comte's philosophy *as a whole*. No candid mind can refuse to acknowledge the great merit there is in many of his separate researches, both in physical science and in sociology.

EDINBURGH: BALLANTYNE AND HUGHES.

EDINBURGH: PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE AND HUGHES.

TO THE  
UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW,  
IN WHICH HIS EARLY ATTACHMENT TO PHILOSOPHY  
WAS AT ONCE STIMULATED AND DIRECTED,  
THE FOLLOWING PAGES  
ARE GRATEFULLY DEDICATED BY  
THE AUTHOR.

## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THE author, in sending forth the present work to the public, wishes at the outset to bespeak the candour and indulgence of the reader. The subject, he is well aware, is at present of a very unpopular character; besides which, the abstruseness of many of the details renders it vain to hope that he has succeeded in discussing them without falling into some errors and many imperfections. The work itself is not the production of an experienced writer; it contains the first thoughts which the author has yet ventured to intrude upon public notice, and was composed in the quietude of a country life, without the aid of any mind to suggest improvements. Under these circumstances he feels that, while he is bound to speak with much modesty of his own labours, he can at the same time lay some reasonable claim to kind consideration from the critical reader.

With regard to originality, the author makes

very little pretension to anything of the kind. He has used very freely the opinions and the arguments of other people ; seldom rejecting an apposite idea because it was to be found amongst the productions of some other mind. Should he only succeed in bringing *great truths and principles* before the attention of his fellow-men, he will not envy any one the first origination of them. If it may be now allowed him to lay down the stiffness of the third person, and assume the confidential ease of the first, he will detail as briefly as possible the train of circumstances which has led to the present attempt, and the purpose he has had in view in making it.

Whilst going through a systematic course of general study in London, I was induced, from a somewhat undefined idea of the importance of the subject, to take up Locke's "Essay on the Human Understanding." The perusal of that immortal work seemed to open a region of surpassing grandeur ; but at the same time gave few results, upon which it was possible to rest with calmness and satisfaction. I next betook myself to the Lectures of Dr Thomas Brown, hoping to find there the satisfaction I required. In this hope I was not *for the time* disappointed. The style was so captivating, the views so comprehensive, the arguments so acute, the whole thing so complete, that I was

almost insensibly borne along upon the stream of his reasoning and his eloquence. Naturally enough I became a zealous disciple ; I accepted his mental analysis as almost perfect ; I defended his doctrine of causation ; with him I stood in astonishment at the alleged obtuseness of Reid ; and, with the exception of his ethical system, was ready to consider “ ipse dixit ” as a valid argument for the truth of any metaphysical dogma. Induced by the lively admiration I had conceived for the Scottish metaphysics, I proceeded to the University of Glasgow, and studied philosophy in the class-rooms which had been honoured by the presence and enlightened by the genius of Reid and Smith. Here the veneration for Brown began to subside ; I felt that there was a depth in the philosophy of Reid which I had not fully appreciated, and that the sensational tendency of the former, though it added popularity to his thoughts, was an ill exchange from the incipient spiritualism of the latter. Hoping to probe the questions relating to the foundation of human knowledge more to their centre, I attempted to read Kant’s “ Critick of Pure Reason,” and some few other Continental works ; but they for the most part opened a region so entirely new, that I felt quite unable to compare their results *as a whole* with those of the Scottish metaphysicians. De-

sirous, however, of pursuing the subject still further, I repaired to Germany; I heard Brandis and Fichte expound German philosophy in their lecture rooms, and spent some months in reading the standard works of the great masters. The different systems, which were here contending for the preference, gradually became intelligible; but, alas! they stood alone—in complete isolation;—to compare their method, their procedure, their aim, their results satisfactorily with those of our English and Scottish philosophy, appeared, as yet, almost impossible. To gain light, therefore, upon these points, I turned my attention to France; the name of eclecticism seemed too inviting to be turned away, as it often is, on the charge of syncretism or want of profundity; and my hopes were not altogether deceptive. I found, or thought that I found, in the writings of Cousin, and others of the modern eclectics, the germs of certain great principles, upon which a comparison of all the philosophical systems of the present age could be advantageously instituted, and saw, that such a comparison would be of very important service to one, who should be anxious to travel, as I had done, over the broad field of European metaphysics. How eagerly should I have welcomed such a directory myself, while I was toiling to get some clear light upon the conflicting



systems of Germany; how highly should I have valued a simple and definite statement of the foundation principle of the different schools—how intensely rejoiced in a work which would show the relations of the one to the other! It was with a view, therefore, of supplying the want which I had myself felt, that I began the sketch which has now swelled into these two volumes; and it is in the hope that it may afford to others what I myself vainly sought for, that it is now ushered with all its imperfections before the public.

The plan of the work, as a whole, may be stated in very few words. First, I have attempted to explain and illustrate the general idea of philosophy, and to deduce the fundamental notions from which it springs. Having grasped the idea of philosophy *generally*, I attempt next to point out the different views which have been entertained of its details; in other words, to classify the different *systems* which have been in vogue, more or less, in every age of the world. Having obtained four great generic systems as the result of this classification, I have endeavoured, in the first part of my plan, to trace their history from the revival of letters to the opening of the nineteenth century; in the second part, to follow up that history more minutely to the pre-

sent age ; and in the third part, to discover their tendencies as it respects the future.

I would beg leave, further, to make one or two remarks on the *phraseology* which I have found it necessary to employ, and to which some, perhaps, might be inclined to make objection. There are four expressions which occupy a very prominent place throughout the whole work, and those are—sensationalism, idealism, scepticism, and mysticism. Now of these four, the first, I believe, is a word entirely new, and, therefore, demands some apology for its introduction. For some time I used the term sensualism, adopting it literally from the French philosophy ; but the associations which that expression has with what is *morally* vicious was so strong, that I was soon induced to abandon it altogether. Next, I thought of sensism and sensationism, as being terms well adapted to describe the philosophy which builds itself up upon sense, or sensation ; but these seemed to fail in respect to taste and euphony. Lastly, I adopted the term sensationalism, as being at the same time more in accordance with the analogy of our language, and more euphonious to the ear.

With this explanation, I trust no further apology will be considered necessary, for the liberty here

taken, of coining a new term. Had an old one been in existence, it would certainly have been employed in preference. The next term I mentioned above was *idealism*; and this also required no little consideration ere it was adopted. The term rationalism would certainly have been better adapted to express a philosophy starting from conceptions of reason, rather than intimations of sense; but then it has acquired such notoriety in the religious world, that I well knew the penalty of pressing it into my service. On the whole, therefore, as the term *idea* is now very frequently used to signify a mental conception, in opposition to a sensational feeling, I thought it not inappropriate to apply the word *idealism*, in the general sense in which it is found in the following pages. The terms scepticism and mysticism need no comment; they are used in their ordinary philosophical sense, and only require to be accompanied by the single caution, that they be not understood on any occasion, in their peculiarly theological acceptation. With regard to such terms as philosophy, metaphysics, science, &c., I have not employed them in any peculiar and distinctive signification. I have preferred their loose popular use, as being more adapted to an historical inquiry; and trust that, wherever they are employed *distinctively*, the

meaning intended to be conveyed will be clearly pointed out by the connexion, or some qualifying adjunct to the words themselves.

With regard to that portion of the work which relates to the German philosophy, I think it due to myself to remind the reader of the extreme difficulty there is in setting forth these German ideas in an English dress. The mere translation of any of the writings of Hegel or Schelling, or even of Kant himself, into English, would prove entirely unintelligible to the mass of English readers. The only method of adapting their philosophy to the English mind, is, to master their ideas, and then, having thrown all books on one side, to attempt a reproduction of them, in our own style and language. How far I have succeeded in doing this, it is not for me to judge; but I can only express my conviction, that, by due reflection, the whole of what is really valuable in the German metaphysics, might be made just as comprehensible to all ordinary philosophical minds, in English, as it is in any other language whatever.

The only point to which I would further allude is, to the marks of rapidity and brevity, which the reader may notice, in discussing some of the most important systems which come before us. The fact is, that I intended, at first, simply to compile a

manual, in one volume ; when I found, accordingly, that the matter increased rapidly upon my hands, I constantly wrote under the desire of *compression* ; and it was not till the work was more than half completed, that I found it necessary to enlarge my original plan. The first three chapters must, at any rate, have given but a very rapid glance at the subjects there treated of ; the intention of them being simply to prepare the way for a right estimate of philosophy in the present century. In the other part of the work, however, sufficient, I trust, has been written, to give a full portraiture of the principles upon which every separate school is founded.

The mature philosopher, moreover, will doubtless feel a want of depth in the discussion of some of the great points which our criticism involves. It must be remembered, however, that I have not written so much for philosophers as for the mass of educated and thinking minds in our country. With this view, I have, in many instances, thought it right and useful, somewhat to sacrifice depth and fulness of research to the desire for clearness and popularity.

Should the present attempt meet with a favourable reception, I shall consider it a sufficient inducement to go on in the effort I have com-

menced, of bringing the great questions respecting the grounds and validity of human knowledge, respecting the laws of thought, and respecting the history of their scientific development, before the public. Sure I am, that the mechanical tendency of the age is fast wearing itself out, and that the current of philosophical investigation will soon begin to flow towards the elucidation of human nature, in its individual and in its social capacity. In such investigations, the history of thought will afford some of the principal data on which to work. Should the present manual only draw attention to the importance of the subject, and lead any other minds to direct their energies to it, I shall not fear that my labour will ultimately prove to be in vain.

## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

IN offering to the public a second and enlarged edition of the present work, there are some few explanations into which I feel it requisite to enter. The distinct object I had in view, in the first composition of the work, was to make an unpopular subject as clear and interesting as possible. I expressly stated, in the preface to the first edition, that I had not written for the *scientific* ; but that, impressed with the importance of philosophical truth generally, I had endeavoured to make its chief problems accessible to the mass of educated and thinking minds.

I did not *then* realise, on the one hand, the probability, or even the possibility, that this feature of my plan, which was regarded by me as its chief utility, could be seized upon as the ground either of objection or attack. On the other hand, I did not give credit to the British public at large, for sufficient interest in the abstruser questions of phi-

losophy, either to render a more full discussion of them necessary, or to make any copious references to foreign and other authorities desirable. In this opinion, I am glad to find I was deceived.

In order, therefore, at once, to turn aside the imputations of the hypercritical and to supply the wants of those who may be emulous of advancing onwards in the pathway of philosophy, I have thought it right to offer my former work to the public in an improved, and more legitimately historical form.<sup>1</sup>

The additions now made may be easily enumerated. First, the notes at the foot of the page are intended to furnish somewhat fuller historical information, wherever it seemed requisite, respecting the authors whose opinions are described, and to point out the portions of their works, in which the more important features of their respective systems are contained. Secondly, this distinctive reference to the works in question, has, in many instances,

<sup>1</sup> One word with regard to reviews. Upon those which have taken up the questions with vigour and intelligence, I have made some remarks in the notes and appendix, whenever I thought the objections demanded attention. To those who have attempted to argue against philosophy, without understanding anything about it; or have undertaken to refute the writers of France and Germany, while they evidently have never read through a philosophical work in either language, I have not thought it worth the trouble to reply.



demanding a more distinctive and detailed description of the systems themselves in the text. Some of the articles, indeed, have been entirely rewritten; others have been considerably enlarged; while all have been carefully revised.

Thirdly, a considerable quantity of matter in the present edition is entirely new, not only with regard to the *treatment* of the subjects, but with regard to the subjects themselves. This new matter refers chiefly to authors and systems, of which no previous mention was made, but of which, for the sake of historical completeness, I have thought it right to give some distinct account. Moreover, in the conclusion and appendix, there will be found a somewhat fuller development of the author's views, on some points connected with the method of philosophical investigation, and the grounds of natural theology.

With regard to the philosophical doctrines which are advocated, I am not aware that these are, in any respect, modified; the revision being entirely confined, either to the more precise expression of the ideas themselves, or to the correction of some minor, chiefly historical, errors, which had before unwittingly crept into the text. There is one point only, on which I am desirous of making a few

remarks, and that is on the subject of Locke and his philosophy.

The real sentiments of the “Essay on the Human Understanding” have long been, and to all appearance are long likely to be, a disputed point between metaphysicians of different schools. It is, at once, instructive and amusing to read the various comments which have been called forth upon this topic. On the one hand, I have been taken to task, by no mean authority, for favouring Locke’s sensualism *too much*, and not exposing its bitter and baneful consequences. On the other hand, I have been just as severely criticised, for *not* doing justice to our great countryman. By one party, that, namely, professing extreme sensationalism, Locke has been claimed as an unconditional supporter of their peculiar views; while, by another party, it is admitted, that the *philosophy* I have maintained, is correct; but it is affirmed, that Locke’s philosophy is precisely the same!

The most obvious conclusion we must draw from these phenomena, is—that whatever be Locke’s views, they are not very easy to come at; that whether it be from want of precision in the style, or whether from a want of uniformity in the opinions, the Essay is such, upon the whole, as to lead

different minds to very opposite conclusions. It cannot be denied, that both parties have much to say for themselves, and that they can each bring an array of passages from different portions of the Essay, which appear to establish conclusively their several hypotheses. Under these circumstances, the only course remaining, is to look to the spirit which breathes through the entire work, and to estimate, in this way, its general bearing. I am still of the same opinion as ever, that any one honestly and intelligently following this course, would class Locke midway between the philosophy which finds a distinct and *a priori* source of ideas in the reason, and that which makes sensation the generating principle of all our mental activity. That he maintains the existence of *active faculties*, without which we could not possess any of the so-termed "ideas of reflection," no one, as I before showed, can for a moment deny; but to suppose that these faculties involve anything more than a mere formal and logical mechanism, or have any real *material* to act upon, except that which is furnished by the senses, appears to me to be contrary to the spirit of Locke's whole polemic against innate ideas; as it was also to that of Kant's "Critick of Pure Reason." The charge of having viewed Locke, *simply* through foreign authorities, I utterly disclaim. His Essay

was my first companion in philosophy, and I studied it throughout, long before I ever opened a single work of any French or German writer. The reason I have followed, *in the main*, Cousin's criticisms, is, primarily, because I considered them very near the truth; and, secondly, because they present the subject in a form best calculated for giving a popular view of the whole question.

In admiration of Locke as a man and a thinker, I yield to none, even of his warmest partisans. So long as integrity in moral principle, firmness in purpose, practical vigour of intellect, and sincerity in religious profession, are admired in the genuine English character, will Locke ever stand forth as one of its noblest examples. But it must be abundantly evident to every mind, (except perhaps to those which are cast in his own mould,) that Locke belongs to that class of thinkers, who live more amongst the forms and definitions of logical ideas, than to those who seek direct intuitions of higher truth; that he seldom or never transcends the region of the understanding, to gaze upon the conceptions which are only accessible to the pure reason. With those who deny this distinction in mental character, I have little or no expectation of coming to any adjustment upon the philosophy of our great countryman. And, therefore, I antici-

pate, that so long as the two great schools of sensationalism and idealism last, the contest will be ever renewed and never concluded. I only express the hope, that the future combatants will avoid that unhappy dogmatism, which always arises from sheer incapacity of seeing beyond one's own system; and that instead of bolstering up their particular view, by casting gratuitous imputations on the sense or honesty of their opponents, (which, be it remembered, are retorted as easily as made,) they will learn that truth may be gazed on from many different points of view, each of which may have its advantages as well as its defects.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> To express more fully what I mean, by numbering Locke amongst logical, rather than intuitional thinkers, I cannot avoid quoting a parallel which has been drawn by a writer of no mean abilities between the genius of Locke and that of William Penn. "Locke, like William Penn, was tolerant; both loved freedom, both cherished truth in sincerity. But Locke kindled the torch of liberty at the fires of tradition; Penn at the living light in the soul. Locke sought truth through the senses and the outward world; Penn looked inward to the Divine revelations in every mind. Locke compared the soul to a sheet of white paper, just as Hobbes had compared it to a slate, on which time and chance might scrawl their experience; to Penn, the soul was an organ which of itself instinctively breathes Divine harmonies, like those musical instruments which are so curiously and perfectly framed, that, when once put in motion, they of themselves give forth all the melodies designed by the artist that made them. To Locke, 'Conscience is nothing else than our own opinion of our

The rapid sale of the former edition of this work, has given a decisive proof that the interest felt in philosophy in our own country, is far from being

own actions ;' to Penn it is the image of God and his oracle in the soul. Locke, who was never a father, esteemed 'the duty of parents to preserve their children not to be understood without reward and punishment ;' Penn loved his children with not a thought for the consequences. Locke, who was never married, declares marriage an affair of the senses ; Penn revered woman as the object of fervent, inward affection, made, not for lust, but for love. In studying the understanding, Locke begins with the sources of knowledge ; Penn with an inventory of our intellectual treasures. Locke deduces government from Noah and Adam, rests it upon contract, and announces its end to be the security of property ; Penn, far from going back to Adam, or even to Noah, declares 'that there must be a people before a government,' and, deducing the right to institute government from man's moral nature, seeks its fundamental rules in the immutable dictates of 'universal reason,' its end in freedom and happiness. The system of Locke lends itself to contending factions of the most opposite interests and purposes ; the doctrine of Fox and Penn, being but the common creed of humanity, forbids division, and insures the highest moral unity. To Locke, happiness is pleasure ; things are good and evil only in reference to pleasure and pain ; and to inquire after the highest good, is as absurd as to dispute whether the best relish be in 'apples, plums, or nuts ;' Penn esteemed happiness to lie in the subjection of the baser instincts, to the instinct of Deity in the breast, good and evil to be eternally and always as unlike as truth and falsehood, and the inquiry after the highest good to involve the purpose of existence. Locke says plainly, 'that, but for rewards and punishments' beyond the grave, it is *certainly right* to eat, drink, and enjoy what we delight in ;' Penn, like Plato and Fenelon, maintained the doctrine so terrible to despots, that God is to be loved for his own

inconsiderable. To the hope that the present attempt may foster the love for subjects which are of such vast importance in the political, moral, and religious development of every people, the present improved edition is now consecrated.

sake, and virtue to be practised for its intrinsic loveliness. Locke derives the idea of infinity from the senses, describes it as purely negative, and attributes it to nothing but space, duration, and number; Penn derived the idea from the soul, and ascribed it to truth, and virtue, and God. Locke declares immortality a matter with which reason has nothing to do, and that revealed truth must be sustained by outward signs and visible acts of power; Penn saw truth by its own light, and summoned the soul to bear witness to its own glory. Locke believed not so many men in wrong opinions as is commonly supposed, because the greatest part have no opinions at all, and do not know what they contend for; Penn likewise vindicated the many, but it was because truth is the common inheritance of the race. Locke, in his love of tolerance, inveighed against the methods of persecution as 'Popish practices;' Penn censured no sect, but condemned bigotry of all sorts as inhuman."—BANCROFT's *History of the United States*.

GLOUCESTER CRESCENT, REGENT'S PARK,

May 2, 1847.

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## INTRODUCTION.

### SECT. I.—*Philosophy explained.*

EVERYTHING that is brought into existence must have a *final cause*. The final cause of man's intellectual faculties is *to know*, and the material of knowledge is *truth*. The search after truth, therefore, is the natural sphere of our mental activity, and *philosophy* (which is the name we give to this process when it is carried on with intelligence and design) is at once a real want, and a necessary product of the human mind.

The process of knowing, however, is a very gradual one. The infant mind appears first to exist in a state of bare receptivity. The first intellectual impulse that manifests itself, is simply the desire of receiving impressions, which pour in upon it from every side, with the greatest possible intensity. As the mind develops, these impressions are remembered, compared, and classified ;



so that, on our emerging from the cloud of our infancy, we find that we have been spontaneously active in gaining an extensive acquaintance with the phenomena of what we term the external world. This spontaneous activity, therefore, we find has even thus early given us a practical knowledge of outward things, in many of the relations which they hold to ourselves and to each other; and the result of advancing years and continued experience is, in ordinary cases, simply to afford us the means of a wider observation, of a more extensive comparison, and of a more complete classification of them.

This knowledge of *phenomena* (of things as they seem) is sufficient for all the practical wants of human life; and the mass of mankind are content to confine their observation to them alone, without any inquiry respecting their real nature, the mode of their subsistence, or the medium by which the mind perceives them. The life of men, therefore, who are thus conversant about phenomena only, we term *spontaneous*. Their mind, stimulated by the external world, exercises its faculties without being *reflectively* conscious of a single mental operation; impressions and ideas exist, but it is never asked how, or why, they exist; mental operations are carried on, but it is never surmised in what manner they are carried on; knowledge is gained, but no inquiry is raised about the grounds or certainty of it; thought, in a word, goes forth, but it never returns to render account

of itself, or to inquire how it has been produced, or how far it is of any value, as being an accurate reflection of the truth of things *as they are*.

Whilst, however, the spontaneous life has ever been that of the mass of mankind, there always have been minds that could not content themselves with knowing only the world of outward phenomena. Their mental activity having first gone forth to grasp the varied forms of the outward world, returned back, when it had accomplished this purpose, to inquire how the process had been managed, what were the powers of mind employed, and what confidence there is to be placed in the result. This process is what is properly termed *reflection*; and the reflective life, accordingly, is that which attempts to render a true account of the spontaneous life of man. The first man that *reflected* was the first speculative philosopher,—the first time that ever thought returned to inquire into itself and arrest its own trains, was the commencement of intellectual philosophy; and once commenced, it was inevitable that philosophy should continue as long as a problem was left in the mental or moral world to be solved. The primary efforts of reason to get at the ground principles of human knowledge were naturally weak and imperfect; but as reflection progressed the path became clearer, until some one individual of more than ordinary reflective power arrived, as he considered, at a solution of the main problems of human life, and sent it forth as such into the world. This was

the first *system* of philosophy ; and as successive attempts to do the same thing have differed in respect to their principles, their method, their extent, and their results, so they have given rise to the different *systems* of philosophy, which have been thrown up to the light of day by the ever-flowing tide of human thought, and the ever-restless striving of the human reason.

Philosophy has been variously defined. By some it is termed "the science of the absolute and universal;" by others, it is viewed as that which is to explain the *principles* and *causes* of all things ; whilst others, again, denominate it that branch of human knowledge which is conversant with abstract and necessary truth.<sup>1</sup> All these definitions, and many others which might be mentioned, amount, in fact, very nearly to the same thing. If it were necessary to make the idea of philosophy still clearer, perhaps we might say that it is the science of *realities* in opposition to that of mere appearances,—the attempt to comprehend things as they *are*, rather than as they *seem*. Starting originally from phenomena, internal and external, it seeks to dis-

<sup>1</sup> Tennemann defines philosophy as "Wissenschaft der letzten Gründe und Gesetze der Natur und Freiheit, so wie ihres Verhältnisses zu einander." *Vid.* Grundriss der Ges. der Phil. p. 2.

For a perspicuous explanation of the idea of Philosophy, *vid.* "Manuel de Philosophie," par MM. Jaques, Simon, and Saisset. p. 5, *et seq.*

The following definition has been suggested to me as comprehending every essential point—"Philosophy is the science which reduces all things to the region of pure Ideas—and then traces their connection and unity."

cover what reality there is beneath them, what is the law of their development, and what the ground of their existence. Thus, if it treat of the subjective world, it inquires into the nature and validity of our faculties, into the true foundation of our knowledge and faith; if, on the other hand, it treat of the objective world, it strives to look through the outward appearance of things, and comprehend the essence by which they are upheld; having done this, it next seeks to determine the connexion that subsists between subject and object, and the common origin from which they both proceed. In carrying on this process of inquiry, the human mind can never content itself with a superstructure of knowledge which is either uncertain in its foundations or imperfect in any of its parts; accordingly the philosophic spirit, when once begun, ever strives after a perfected system, in which every phenomenon within or around it shall be accounted for, and every problem analyzed and solved. The history of the continued progress of this attempt to unfold abstract and fundamental truth, is the history of philosophy; the different systems are but different movements of the whole process, and the united sum of such truth which now exists in the world is the fruit of philosophy up to the present time.

## SECT. II.—*Objections answered.*

Philosophy (regarded in the light in which we have placed it, as the striving of man's reason to

comprehend the great problems of the world within and the world without, to probe their real nature and assign their true origin) has often met with no little opposition, and even contempt, as being either in the nature of things an impossibility, or if not impossible, yet, at least, altogether fruitless. It may be proper, therefore, to notice the principal forms in which one or other of these objections have been brought forward, and to weigh their validity.

I. It has often been urged that our possible knowledge is confined to phenomena, which come to us primarily through the senses, arranged and modified as the case may be by subsequent reflection; that all we have to do, accordingly, is to investigate and interpret *nature*; that this has acknowledgedly led, and may still lead us, to splendid results; but that when we step beyond the observance and classification of sensible phenomena, so far from getting at any deeper results, we are going away from the beat of human knowledge altogether, into absolute darkness and uncertainty.<sup>1</sup> To this, however, the metaphysician replies, — that, however correct such a view of things may seem to the mere naturalist, yet it is

<sup>1</sup> This objection was practically exhibited in the spirit of the French Encyclopædia in the last century. In the present century it has been reiterated by the advocates of the *positive* philosophy. *Vid.* “Cours de Philosophie positive”—par Auguste Comte. See also the same explained in a pamphlet by M. Littré—“De la Philosophie positive.” For a further account of this system, the reader is referred to the closing section of our first volume.

impossible for the human reason as a whole abruptly to stop at the limits of mere observation, and rest satisfied with the results it affords without striving or desiring to advance beyond them. And if it be asked, why it is impossible for us to rest satisfied when the mind has done its best in making observations and classifying them; there are many reasons that at once present themselves in reply. First, how do we know that our observations are correct? what is the ground of our confidence in our own sensations? are we quite certain that the representations of external things within our own minds, is a correct delineation of the truth of things without? Of many of our sensations we become convinced, by a very little reflection, that they cannot possibly have any external reality answering to them. Colours, for example, arise from the separation of the rays of light, and sounds are produced by pulsations of the air; but will any one assert that anything external exists at all similar to the impression of colours or sounds which we experience within? Where, again, is the outward reality to which the inward sensations of bitter and sweet correctly answer? It is true that such sensations may prove to us the existence of some powers of nature out of ourselves; but is equally true that what we perceive is simply our own relation to these powers, that all we can directly observe in each case is our own subjective state, and that whatever these arrangements of nature may be *in themselves* separate from our own feeling, they are to us wholly unknown. And

if this be the case with *some* of our sensations, why, it might be argued, may it not be so with *all*? If, for example, I *see* an external object, what do I perceive directly but my own subjective state, and where is the proof that this subjective state is a perfect exemplar or pattern of the outward reality? Is there any ground of certainty on this point, or is there not? In either case philosophy is necessary, on the one hand to show the ground of the certainty, if there be any,—on the other, to prove to us that there is none, and thus to fix the *limits* of human knowledge; and show where we must begin to rest upon a simple and undemonstrable belief.

But the metaphysician goes a step further in his reply. You outward observers, he says, it is true, collect together many facts of a diversified and interesting character, and deduce many empirical laws, but what is the nature of this knowledge? You know after all only passing phenomena, objects that are ever liable to change. The knowledge of *single* things, and mere empirical laws, however great in extent, is no *real* knowledge at all, for they may all pass away, or alter their relations; and then what *was* knowledge becomes error. I want to know if there is not such a thing as *absolute* knowledge,—whether there is not truth that must be ever and unchangeably truth,—whether there is not an immutable basis behind all this multiplicity of contingent phenomena;—whether I cannot find something that is *necessary*, and which will serve as a foundation, on which to erect a sys-

tem of real and unalterable science. If there be such absolute truth, it must be elicited by philosophical thinking ; if there be *not*, then philosophy is equally necessary to convince me that I can have no knowledge beyond what is contingent,—that is, that I can have no knowledge which may not at some future time be error and delusion.

So far the metaphysician answers the objection of the mere outward observer, even upon his own principle, “That all our possible knowledge is confined to the perception and subsequent classification of phenomena.” But now, after having shown that, even in that case, there is need of employing speculative philosophy in order to investigate the validity of these phenomena, he comes to the principle itself, and asks, Is it veritably a true one? Is there *really* no other source of ideas beside sensations, modified as they may be by subsequent reflection? In other words, is there no other source beside experience? Should any one assert this, then we ask, *what is experience?* Experience cannot result from mere isolated perceptions, for in that case the consciousness of one moment could have no reference to that of another. In all experience a *subject* is implied as well as an *object* ; the multiplicity of our perceptions is all referred to one individual mind, by which the whole inference they convey is gathered up, and which remains ever essentially *the same*, although it may be subject to an infinity of changes. Whence, then, does this notion of *self* arise? How does the first



idea of it come to us? Not from experience; for we have just seen that it virtually exists before experience is possible. It must arise, therefore, from some prior source, and if so, furnishes us at least with one idea, for the matter of which we are not indebted to our sensational faculty. And if the fact of experience points us to some idea previously existing in the mind, so likewise equally does the whole phenomenon of thought or reflection. There is a unity in thought. If we search our own consciousness, we find that however varied thought may be, however many rays it may send forth in all directions, yet they all coincide in one point, all emanating from a thinking self, which is eternally the same undivided and indivisible Being. But whence comes the notion of this unity which we term self? Not from mere reflection; for all reflection supposes it. We are obliged, therefore, to look about for some other origin of ideas until this matter shall be cleared up; and it cannot be cleared up without the application of philosophy.

But if the objector is not satisfied with this refutation of his principle, the metaphysician goes on to adduce other ideas, and those of no little practical moment, which he feels equally inclined to remove from the whole province of sensible phenomena, however much they may be refined or generalized by after reflection. Whence, for example, come the notions of right and wrong? Twist them about as you will, and tell me by which of the five senses the first elements of these notions

come into the mind. If they, indeed, do come ~~from~~ reflection upon outward phenomena, it can only be from the observation that one course of conduct produces painful effects, and another pleasing ones ; that right and wrong, therefore, are other terms for useful and injurious ; that virtue is another name for utility, justice for convenience, and conscience a balancing of advantage and disadvantage : —a grave conclusion assuredly, and one that lies at the foundation of our practical life, one, therefore, which we ought not very readily to admit, unless it be proved on very clear and philosophical grounds. Forth, then, with your philosophy to give us satisfaction. Whence again arises the notion of causation ? If we appeal to our senses we can see, it is true, that one action uniformly follows another, and that one set of circumstances uniformly follows another set, as far at least as our own experience goes. But if that is a sufficient account of our notion of causation, what right have we to take for granted that a cause exists at all in cases where our senses give us no assistance, and which lie beyond the beat of our own personal experience ? What, then, becomes of the great argument from final causes, on which mainly rests our confidence in the being of a God ? Why should we infer the existence of a supreme *power*, the creator and sustainer of all things, if the idea of causation contains no notion of power whatever, and is made to rest simply on the faith of what we experience through the medium of sense alone ? The objection, ac-

cordingly, which is thus urged against philosophical investigation may, if pushed to its full extent, become fatal to the groundwork both of morality and religion ; at any rate, the duty lies upon the objector to show that it is not so ; and in order to show that, he must enter into the metaphysical discussion which the whole question involves. We might adduce many other ideas, such as those of space, of time, of substance, of infinity, as well as some of the primary conceptions of mathematical truth, all of which carry with them the same appearance of belonging to a class of notions quite beyond the region of mere phenomena ; those, however, which we have already mentioned may be sufficient for our present purpose.

But, lastly, the advocate of plain "common sense," says to the philosopher, You are no better off than we, after all ; for you, too, are obliged to fall back upon *faith* in the end, and are equally unable with ourselves to give demonstration for every thing that you hold true. Assuredly, is the reply. Certain ultimate truths there must be from which all reasoning takes its rise ; but the question is, which *are* ultimate truths and which are *not* ? We all try to find demonstration as far as it is possible to do so ; and as soon as it fails us, there we begin to assume first principles, and trust to the authority of some primary belief. But the great point to be decided is, where are we to fix the *proper* boundary between the two ? Where does demonstration really terminate, and the legitimate

region of faith begin? The child trusts to faith for almost every thing. As the reason strengthens and becomes more active, our childhood's belief begins to give way to knowledge admitted on its proper evidence; and just in proportion to the vigour of our understanding may we move backwards the landmark between demonstration and faith, and include in the former what before lay in the province of the latter. The metaphysician understands the demonstration of everything that the man of mere physical investigation holds true, but he wants to move the boundary a little further back, to see whether he cannot demonstrate what is usually taken for granted; and if he cannot demonstrate it, yet he will at least know what can be considered as proved, and what must be taken simply on the ground of its being a primary belief. Thousand to one, says Lessing, the goal of your philosophy will be the spot where you become weary of thinking any further,—a remark which should caution us not to be too hasty in interdicting any branch of investigation as transcending our faculties, and not to fix the boundaries of demonstrative knowledge without very sufficient grounds.

II. A second objection and prejudice against all philosophical investigation is taken from the alleged fact, that the deepest thinkers on these subjects come to different, yea, even to diametrically opposite conclusions.

The sure and steady march of the mathematical sciences is pointed out as the model of what the

fruits of metaphysical philosophy ought to be, and would be, if it were a genuine branch of human knowledge. The fact, therefore, that such a steady progression is not found, but that contradictions appear to be ever multiplied as speculation goes on, is taken as an argument against the whole range of metaphysical inquiry.<sup>1</sup>

That those which are termed the accurate sciences offer a peculiar facility for investigation, and are removed almost entirely beyond the reach of errors and contradictions, arises from their very nature ; such, however, it must be remembered, is by no means the case with any other of the acknowledgedly genuine branches of human knowledge. In politics, for example, men of the greatest sagacity follow completely opposite theories as to what is, in the main, most conducive to a nation's prosperity ; but should we therefore interdict the whole science of legislation and political economy as being without any ground of certainty, and utterly fruitless in its results ? Is it not clear, on the contrary, that these differences of opinion are but the very means and movements, by which the science as a whole progresses ? Or, to take another illustration which may be within the reach of every one's personal experience, are there not many different forms of Christianity built upon the common data, on the ground of which we all alike receive its *general* authenticity ? Have there not ever been

This is another plea frequently urged by the "positive" school.

contending parties and opposite conclusions, and do we infer from thence that the whole system is untrue, and that no certainty can possibly be arrived at, amidst the clashing opinions to which even the greatest minds are exposed? Far from it. Discussion is the very bulwark of truth—the only safeguard against the imperfection of the human mind—the only chastiser of extravagance—the only antagonist of dogmatism—the only handpost that points us perpetually along the path of moderation, which is most commonly the path of truth. The little mind that looks upon contending sects around is scandalized, and says with Pilate in a jest, “What is truth?” without ever intending to listen for a reply; but the more expanded intellect sees in these same the strugglings of human thought, by which it will gradually yet surely unfold the whole great system of religious truth from the germs that lie before it in the Word, or around it in the world.

The same principle applies to the case of speculative philosophy. In all researches so recondite in their nature, and so wide and all-embracing in their extent, it was inevitable that one mind should follow out one branch, pushing its conclusions in that direction to their furthest limit; and that another mind, starting from a different point of view and going to the same extreme on the opposite side, should evolve conclusions that appear to be altogether contradictory. The man, therefore, who throws himself into the stream of one particular

system of opinions, and thinks to exhaust all human knowledge by that means, is sure in the end to suffer for his error by having his faith shaken in the results of all philosophical research ; and then a shallow, unthinking "common sense" is by no means unwilling to take the alarm, and enstamp all philosophy as a vain and useless jangle of words, to which it is very uncertain whether or not any true idea can be attached. The more enlarged mind, however, sees that in each particular philosophical tendency an additional step is taken along the road of human knowledge, all the error of which will, in time, be exploded by some opposite school, while the real substantial truth will remain. Analysis is the great instrument of all human investigation ; and analysis, to be scrutinizing and severe, must be confined to one point at a time. Select, then, your point—single it out from the whole superstructure of truth—bend upon it the whole of your analytical force ; and then what is the inevitable result ? We answer—truth and error combined. Error there must be more or less, from the isolation which is made of this one particular point from all its necessary relations ; but this error is only an unavoidable step for the further discovery of truth, because the analysis of every individual question is the more accurate in proportion as the whole mind is absorbed in it alone, to the exclusion of every other. Every school of philosophy, then, may be regarded as the analysis of one particular branch of philosophical truth ; and

it only requires a subsequent synthesis to put together the combined result of the different systems, in order to show what has been the net increase they have brought to the whole mass of human knowledge. To sober and earnest minds there is no such thing as *positive* error. To such all error is negative ; it is a falling short of the fact of the case, it consists in isolation and incompleteness ; so that all analysis may be said to result in positive and negative conclusions, in plus and minus quantities ; and synthesis is the process by which the whole is summed up and the final amount determined.<sup>1</sup>

Now, if we look back steadfastly upon the past history of philosophy, we may see that it has ever had a progressive development, that each age has contributed its portion, greater or less, and that the agitation between the different schools has been, as it were, the pulsations of this forward movement. Thales and Pythagoras combined the vague theories of their age into their own respective systems. Without the former, Democritus and the Atomists would have been impossible ; and without the latter, Parmenides and Zeno had never embodied in regular form the tenets of the Eleatic philosophy. The struggles of these two schools paved the way for

<sup>1</sup> Every *finite* mind is necessarily involved in negative error to a certain extent, from the very fact of its imperfection. So, likewise, all the errors of honest thinkers arise from a false or a depressed stand-point ; they are errors of *incompleteness in thinking*, not the blind acceptance of a falsehood on traditionary or other similar grounds.



Socrates, and thus rendered both Plato and Aristotle possible. Without the former of these, the early Christian philosophy would not have seen the light; and without the latter, the scholastic philosophy could not possibly have arisen. But for the practical fruitlessness of the scholastic age, again, Des Cartes had not sought to recast the whole method of philosophical investigation; and without the results of the old organum before his eyes, Bacon had never framed the new. Had Des Cartes, moreover, or some equivalent mind, failed to point out the new road, Leibnitz had never trodden it, and the German philosophy were still but a possibility; and had Bacon never shown the practical power of induction, Locke had never applied it to the study of the mind, or Newton by its means furnished the key to the temple of the universe. As the course of the vessel that makes its way against the breeze consists of a series of movements, each one of which seems to bear it away from the true direction, yet brings it in fact so much farther on its destined course: so the mind that can only view each individual tack which the philosophic spirit takes, is apt to imagine that every such movement carries it farther from the true mark, whilst those who can take the whole course in at one comprehensive view, see that these apparent deviations are all necessary to bring us nearer and nearer to the centre of eternal truth.

III. These reflections lead us to the consideration of another objection that has been often raised,

more especially against the practical utility of speculative philosophy,—namely, that even supposing it to be a real and genuine branch of human knowledge, yet it can only find place in a very few minds, and must ever be completely unintelligible to the mass. This, therefore, is presented as an insuperable barrier against its ever becoming of any extensive advantage, or indeed of its having any kind of influence upon mankind at large.<sup>1</sup> Such an objection, we reply, if insisted on, would prove fatal to the cause of almost every branch of human science. It is never expected, and indeed it is not possible, that the mass of mankind should be acquainted with the process, by which any kind of investigation whatever is carried on. The search after truth, even the truths of the phenomenal world, is a process to them completely enveloped in darkness; all they have to do is to reap the practical fruits of any discovery, when it is made, without casting one single thought upon the steps by which others have arrived at it. If we look for a moment at the law by which thought is propagated, we find that it always descends from the highest order of thinkers to those who are one degree below them; from these again it descends another degree, losing at each step of the descent something more of the scientific form, until it reaches the mass in the shape of some admitted fact, of which they feel there is not a shadow of

<sup>1</sup> This is the ordinary plea of sensational utilitarianism.

doubt, a fact which rests on the authority of what all the world above them says, and which, therefore, they receive totally regardless of the method of its elimination. Take, for example, any great fact or law of nature ascertained by means of physical science. Such a fact is first of all, perchance, wrung from the most close and laborious mathematical analysis ; a few, perhaps, may take the trouble to follow every step of this process ; but the mass even of natural philosophers themselves are content to see what is the method of investigation, to copy the formulas in which it results, and then put it down as so much further accession to their physical science. The mass of intelligent, educated minds, again, with a general idea only of mathematical analysis, accept the fact or law we are now supposing, as one of the many beautiful results of investigations, which they acknowledge to be far beyond the reach of their own powers ;—and from them, lastly, it descends to the rest of the community as a *bare fact*, which they appropriate to their own use, simply as being a universally acknowledged truth. The first school-boy you meet would very likely tell you with some accuracy what is the rapidity of light ; but as to any observations on the occultations of Jupiter's satellites, or on the phenomena of aberration, or any other such method of computing it, on these he has never bestowed a thought. The commonest seaman that has learned the use of his sextant, applies to his own purposes all the necessary formulas of trigonometry ; but as

to the methods of investigating such formulas, such matters lie entirely out of his reach.

This law of the descent of thought, however, —this gravitation of ascertained truth from the higher order of minds to the lower, is not confined to the mathematical sciences, nor is it here alone that the results of investigation are transmitted by what may be termed *formulas*. There are such things as historical formulas, as formulas for the various theories of the fine arts, and so also are there philosophical or metaphysical formulas. The results of long and patient reflection, in this last case particularly, embody themselves in some general principle; and this principle, after it has been tested, gradually spreads itself downwards from mind to mind, until thousands act upon it every day of their life, to whom all philosophical thinking is completely foreign. When, therefore, the objection is raised, that metaphysical inquiries lie beyond the reach of the mass, and cannot practically subserve the general interests of mankind, it is entirely forgotten or overlooked, that the *results* of such inquiries are intelligible to all; nay, that they are amongst the most practically efficient and influential of all truths, which can possibly exist in the mind of man. This assertion is fully borne out by much that we meet with in the intellectual history of the past. How few could there have been amongst the multitude of mankind who, in the Middle Ages, ever read a page of Aristotle! And did Aristotle, therefore, exercise but little

influence upon them? Far from it. The minds of those who *did* think deeply, were completely moulded by his philosophy; these, again, governed the reflections of those immediately beneath them; and from them the results of Aristotelianism, mingling up as they did especially with the religious opinions of the day, reached the whole of the popular intellect. Look again at the sensualistic philosophy of France during the last century. The people at large, it is true, neither read Locke, from whose writings that philosophy professedly, though not justly emanated, neither did they study the new edition of his principles as published and distorted by Condillac, nor did they understand the process by which Cabanis and others developed the system to its farthest consequences. But they had no difficulty in laying hold of what we may term the formulas of that philosophy—formulas which came before them in very intelligible propositions, declarative of complete materialism, together with an implied denial both of the doctrine of man's immortality, and the existence of a God. We are strongly inclined, indeed, to think, that the results of intellectual philosophy, really speaking, influence the mass of mankind practically more than those of any other department of knowledge whatever; inasmuch as they bear most closely upon the very principles of all human action, elevate or depress the general feeling as to the worth and sanctity of virtue, and give a colouring to the popular religionism of the age.

All this assuredly should remind us, that these results ought neither to be looked upon with indifference or contempt, nor to be framed but upon the most patient and extended investigation.

IV. There is one more objection against intellectual philosophy in its widest extent, which requires some little consideration, namely, That it is entirely superseded and rendered unnecessary by *revelation*. Revelation, it is urged, is an authoritative view of human nature and of human destiny, and was given to perfect the otherwise imperfect knowledge we had of our position and prospects in the universe ; so that, to philosophise on these things, is no other than to go back to the state in which mankind existed before they had access to this clearer and better light from heaven. Now, first of all, this conclusion can only have its full weight on the supposition, that the objects of revelation and of speculative philosophy are *all* identical ; or, at any rate, that there is no point touched upon in the latter, which is not sufficiently elucidated in the former. This, however, we can by no means admit to be the case. That revelation has thrown a vast light upon the great problem of the world and of human destiny, we allow ; but that it was ever intended to give us there a complete system of philosophy, to erect an entire superstructure of human knowledge, and leave no problem to be solved in the whole region of mental, moral, or what we may more strictly call metaphysical investigation, we are far from being prepared to grant.

To instance, first, the peculiar department of psychology—who, it is asked, expects to find a complete analysis of our mental faculties and susceptibilities in the Bible? We find, it is true, that the working of our mental powers and faculties is described here and there in the pages of revelation, so far at least as they have a direct bearing upon the religious feelings;—it is true, also, that we see, pointed out for practical use or caution, the passions and desires which are most likely to become dangerous or excessive; in addition to this, some few conclusions, perhaps, might be drawn from the distinction, that is there made, between the soul and the spirit—the animal man and the spiritual man. These, however, are far from being placed before us in a scientific form, neither are they, by any means, *intended* to furnish a full account of our mental constitution. They are given simply for practical use, and accordingly leave open a large field of scientific investigation, from which many valuable results may be drawn by any mind that can apply to it acute powers of analysis and research. Or to adduce still further the department of morals. That a practical morality of the most elevated character runs through the whole of the Scriptures, and peculiarly through those of the New Testament, no one can fail to admit; but, as these writings were intended for popular use, to come down to the habits of thinking common in all ages amongst the mass of mankind, we could not naturally expect to find there the

*speculative* questions of morals either mooted or solved. As far as our practical necessities go, the morals of the Scriptures are *absolutely perfect*, and furnish an ideal of what the purity of our nature *ought to be*, which can be derived from no other source whatever ; but it was never intended, that all efforts of man's intellect on these points should be completely contravened, and repressed as by a voice from heaven, telling us that they could no longer be of any service, or answer any useful end. The speculative questions in morals, which are left untouched in the Scriptures, are amongst the most interesting and important to which the human mind can be directed. The inquiry, for example, "in what conscience essentially consists," whether it be a moral sense implanted in us—or whether it be a moral judgment—or whether it be the result of our natural sympathies—or whether it be the cementing of all our feelings and faculties together into one great regulating principle, gives rise to an investigation, which leads us to examine the very groundwork of our moral constitution. The inquiry, again, as to what *virtue* is, objectively considered—whether it arise from the eternal fitnesses of things, or from utility, or from benevolence, or whether its ground is to be found only in the will of God—presents to us another point where there is scope for the most acute and valuable philosophical research. And if it be asked, *why* we should take the pains to search into these speculative questions of morality when the practical side



is given us in perfection in the Scriptures ; we answer, that the *intellect* of man ever struggles after satisfaction, as well as his moral and religious nature ; and that, while the latter can be completely supplied from the Scriptures, the former must seek the ground of its satisfaction, and combine its materials into a complete superstructure of knowledge, by means of unwearied and laborious thinking. On these points, and on many others, such as those respecting human liberty and necessity, respecting the doctrine of providence in connexion with the subsistence of the material world, respecting our physical conditions here, as influencing the mind, and respecting the “physical theories of another life ;” there is room for many investigations, which are hardly mentioned, not to say exhausted, in the pages of revelation.

But we go a step further in answer to the objection, that revelation renders philosophical thinking unnecessary, and affirm, that the authority of revelation itself must to a considerable extent rest upon it. All religion reposes upon the idea of God as its foundation. Without this idea, revelation itself has no weight, inasmuch as its authority is solely derivable from the fact of its coming *from* God. The being of a God, therefore, is a truth that must to a certain degree be impressed upon us before we open the very first page of inspiration ; nay, its very first proposition would be unintelligible without it. In the beginning, says Moses, God created the heavens and the earth. But who is God ? and

where is the evidence of His existence? All these must be settled points before the Scriptures can be to us of the slightest authority, and they cannot be settled, when once started, without deep inward reflection upon nature, and upon man as its interpreter.

But, perhaps, we shall be reminded that the Scriptures carry with them their own evidence of the divine existence, the evidence, namely, of miracles openly performed, and well authenticated. True—to a certain extent they do, but to an extent which can by no means dispense with the other evidence we have mentioned. For, first of all, the argument from miracle, to whatsoever extent it may be valid, must be interpreted and enforced by the light of our reason—and secondly, its validity, as far as it bears upon the divine *existence*, can, even then, only be of a very secondary character ; for what mind is there that would be convinced of the being of a God from the witnessing of some temporary change in the laws of nature, when it had totally failed of gaining such conviction from the perpetual and standing wonder of creation itself? Assuredly, if nature, in her most beauteous forms and most striking operations, were insufficient to lead our minds to the conception of an efficient Creator, none of [what would then be] her freaks and wanderings would do so. Nay, when we speak of the evidence of miracles as testifying of the hand of God, that evidence, if I mistake not, derives all its strength from the *previous* confidence we have in the existence of an Almighty power, the framer

of the laws of nature, as we see them usually in operation, and which laws, we argue, could not be changed by any power *less* than that, which first called them into being. If chance, or fate, or any other blind impulse, could *create* the world, and fix its laws, it has likewise power to *alter* them ; and if, therefore, our reflection upon the constitution of things around us as they are, and the application to them of the great law of causation, is not sufficient to lead us to the conviction of an intelligent cause, from which they sprang, neither would a perpetual series of miracles be able to do so. Miracles, indeed, were never intended to convince any one of the *existence* of God, and it is nought but a misapplication of them to use them for this purpose ; they were merely intended to convince us that this Being (of whose existence we have previous and higher evidence) operates in some particular manner, or through some particular medium.<sup>1</sup> All revealed religion, accordingly, rests upon the pedestal of natural religion ; all natural religion, again, rests upon the existence of a God ; and the certainty of his existence must be derived from the relation of the laws of nature to those of the human mind. If these laws be not established, natural religion fails of a foundation ; and if the foundation of natural religion sinks, the whole authority of revealed religion sinks with it to a nonentity. Revelation,

<sup>1</sup> Since these sentiments were first written, I have been happy to see them further enforced and illustrated in an eloquent article on Pascal, in the "Christian Remembrancer," (Jan. 1847.)

therefore, so far from putting a check upon philosophical investigation in reference to these topics, renders it, in fact, only so much the more necessary, and so much the more valuable in proportion as the superstructure, which by the aid of revelation we build upon it, becomes to us of the deeper importance.<sup>1</sup>

One more thought we throw out upon this objection—namely, that philosophy, by investigating upon natural grounds the state and tendency of human nature, often renders a very essential service to the evidences of revelation. Revelation brings to us a vast number of facts, which it commends to our reception on the ground of testimony and authority. Now, it is clear, that if any of these facts, which come to us primarily upon testimony and authority, can be verified by philosophy, they will carry with them a double evidence, and come home to us with a double weight. Men, who have thought most deeply upon the evidences of revelation, have ever felt how valuable was the accession of strength they attained, wherever scientific investigation could be made to bear upon them. How many, for example, have attempted (we say not how successfully) to elicit a verification of the Mosaic deluge and cosmogony, from the discoveries of geology;<sup>2</sup> in how

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, Note A.

<sup>2</sup> See Sharon Turner's "Sacred History of the Earth," and compare the far more scientific view of the question between Scripture and Geology given in Dr Pye Smith's Lectures "On the Relation between the Holy Scriptures and some parts of Geological Science." Compare also Dr Buckland's "*Reliquiæ Diluvianæ*" with his Bridge-water Treatise.

many instances have we been called upon to hail some fresh light, which physiology has succeeded in throwing upon the scriptural account of the origin of the human family ; and on the same principle, what believer in revelation does not rejoice to see the scriptural representations of man's mental and spiritual condition borne out by close and accurate research into the nature and tendencies of the human mind ? The greater be the number of the facts of revelation, which we can show to rest upon the basis of science as well as authority, the better is it for us, both as it regards the strength of their evidence, and the character of their influence. Philosophy, by carrying certainty with it to a given length, and pointing out real difficulties where that certainty ends, is ever mild in its features and tolerant in its tone ; on the other hand, the more implicitly we bow to authority, the less tolerant we become to those who choose not to bow as obediently as ourselves. The mind always seizes with a kind of convulsive grasp those truths, for which it can give no very satisfactory account, as though the tenacity with which they are held would go to make up the deficiency in their evidence ; and on this ground it is that those who are most ignorant, to prevent the appearance of absurdity, commonly find it necessary to be most dogmatical. On the other hand, an abundance of knowledge and a strength of evidence, as they define more clearly the bounds of the known and the unknown, tend perpetually towards toleration ; a fact, which should make every ray of fresh light that is cast from

any quarter upon religious truth, of additional value to us. There are many facts, moreover, brought before our attention by revelation, which, if they cannot be reduced to a philosophical form, and be shown to rest upon a scientific basis, are yet rendered antecedently probable by the *analogy* they may be seen to bear to the ascertained laws of nature, or of our own constitution. The analogies of the natural world, for example, in many respects point us to the fact of the soul's immortality; and still more strikingly do the elements of our own moral constitution point us to a perfect moral government, where the idea of human accountability shall find its ultimate completion. In all such cases as these, (which the reader may see admirably handled in the immortal work of Bishop Butler,) intellectual philosophy appears as the handmaid of revelation, not only aiding in making firm the foundation on which it rests, but by its results illustrating and confirming many of the most important truths which come to us on the authority of a divine inspiration.

### SECT. III.—*Rise of Philosophy inevitable.*

Thus far we have attempted to remove the chief objections which lead many to consider the speculative philosophy, whether of a former age or of their own, as altogether valueless. Not only do we think, however, that these popular prejudices are

groundless, but we go a step further, and regard speculative philosophy as a thing *absolutely inevitable*—as inevitable as the wants, desires, and tendencies of the human mind can make it. If, from the fact of its universality, we may consider any branch of our mental activity whatever to be a necessary result of our constitution, assuredly we may do so with regard to the philosophic spirit. Every age of the world, and every nation, the mind of which has attained to any degree of cultivation, have had their different philosophies; that is, have attempted to unravel the problems of their own existence, and those of the universe they behold around them. The grave and contemplative Asiatic silently brooded over these subjects in the earlier stages of man's history; the lively and versatile mind of Greece could not fail to think deeply, and to grapple earnestly, with the same great questions; the Roman intellect, at first taken up with the practical toils of warfare and government, was constrained, so soon as the opportunity came, to tread in the same path, notwithstanding it had been already so diligently explored; and Christianity, when it offered peace to the spirit of man wounded by the consciousness of moral imperfection, and satisfied the heart's longing after immortality, did not repress, but rather incited the intellect to greater exertion in order to sound the depths of our being, and fully to comprehend our relation to the Infinite and the Eternal. The Middle Ages, which witnessed

the almost total decline of literature, present us still with the spectacle of the human reason struggling on amidst all the surrounding darkness, in order to look beneath the phenomenal world, and to seek after the foundations of human knowledge ; and ever since the revival of our modern civilisation has given a fresh impulse to the human mind, the whole region of speculative philosophy has been one of the principal objects, upon which it has applied its awakened energies. It is no more possible for the spirit of philosophy to become extinguished, than for the poetic fire to die out of humanity, or the religious faculty to cease to operate within the mind of man ; for as long as the impulse of the intellectual faculties exists, it will be ever seeking after satisfaction.

That philosophy, then, will ever flourish among mankind in every age, we may regard as a fair inference from past experience ; but now we may go a step beyond experience, and show that its rise is rendered *inevitable* by the very nature of human knowledge, and the impulse we possess for acquiring it. To prove this we must establish two facts :—*FIRST, That the power of accurate generalisation is the true index, by which the extent of our knowledge is measured ; and SECONDLY, That every branch of human knowledge, if generalised to its full extent, brings us into the region of metaphysical research.*

To establish the former of these two principles,



we must remember, that human knowledge does not consist in the bare collection and enumeration of facts ; this alone would be of little service did we not attempt to classify them, and to educe from such classification general laws and principles. The knowledge, which consists in individual truths, could never be either extensive or definite,—for the multiplicity of objects, which must then crowd in upon the mind, only tends to confound and perplex it, while the memory, overburdened with particulars, is not able to retain a hundredth part of the materials which are collected. To prevent this, the power of generalisation comes to our aid, by which the individual facts are so classified under their proper conceptions, that they may at the same time be more easily retained, and their several relations to all other branches of knowledge accurately defined. The colligation and classification of facts, then, we may regard as the two first steps which are to be taken in the attainment of scientific Truth.

The next step after this is to inquire, how these facts may be accounted for ; in other words, to consider, what more general fact can be discovered, in which the particular ones shall be contained. In natural science we hear frequent mention made of ascending from particular to general truths,—of different stages of generalisation which occur in this process,—and of the highest step to which all the others are preparatory, and in which they are

included.<sup>1</sup> To illustrate the meaning of these expressions, let us take the case of Astronomy. Any careless observer can perceive the ordinary facts upon which that science is founded. The labourer at his daily toil knows that the moon, the sun, and the planets, rise and set at particular periods. The slightest attention, again, would be sufficient to tell us, that the moon goes through a certain course of changes within a month, and the sun within a year. All these facts, however, are included in, and explained by the more general fact, that the earth moves in an orbit round the sun, and the moon round the earth. This fact, again, is included in the dynamical law, by which the movements of all the heavenly bodies are regulated, and this again in the universal law of gravitation. The difference, therefore, between the knowledge which a careless spectator possesses of any one of the *simple* facts of Astronomy and that possessed by the man of science, lies here—that the one observes the phenomenon simply as a phenomenon, while the other investigates it, places it in connexion with other facts, ascends from the particular to the general, and gets so much nearer to the universal law or principle from which it proceeds. The man who only observes the simple phenomena, we say, possesses the least knowledge; he who ascends to the more general propositions enlarges his knowledge proportionably, and lastly, *his* knowledge is

<sup>1</sup> See Whewell's "Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences." Book xi. chap. vi. p. 239, *et seq.*

the greatest who attains the highest point of generalisation and educes *the fact* which includes in it all the rest. If we were to adduce any other branch of human knowledge, we should find that the same principle would hold good, that the ignorant observer might know as much of the bare facts as any one else, and that the philosopher in every case owes his superiority to the process of generalisation. In asserting this principle, of course we suppose that the generalisation is not hasty and inaccurate, since in that case it could only give rise to false theories; we take for granted, that it is an inference drawn from a sufficiently wide and accurate analysis. When this is the case, it becomes evident that accurate generalisation, implying, as it does, both the most complete observation of the individual phenomena, and a reference of them to their proper conceptions and laws, is always the index of our real knowledge; and just as far as we can legitimately extend it, so far may our knowledge be said to reach.

Viewing this first principle, then, as valid, we shall go on to illustrate, and substantiate the *second*, namely, that every branch of human knowledge, if generalised to its full extent, brings us into the region of metaphysical research; that there is no subject of investigation but tends incessantly to this point; that even those subjects which are most unlike in themselves, and which lead us through entirely different fields of mental labour, yet all, if you trace them far enough, meet together in their

first principles, and all enter the peculiar region of the metaphysician before you have reached their ultimate basis.

To illustrate this truth, almost any subject will answer equally well. The chemist, for example, investigates matter, tracing it by means of observation and experiment through all its different combinations and changes. But who does not know, that the last question at which he arrives, that which weighs the relative claims of ultimate atoms and of infinite divisibility, is one of a purely metaphysical nature? The mechanician studies the laws of forces as exhibited in the material universe, but the explication of the very conception, upon which the whole science rests, that of *power* or causation, again brings us into the province of speculative philosophy. The fundamental axioms and definitions of pure mathematics are just of the same nature; they, too, can only be investigated and explained upon metaphysical grounds. If from these branches of science we turn to that allotted to the physiologist, we find ourselves in another region of thought, at the basis of which lies the mysterious idea of life;—an idea which is closely connected with some of the most interesting problems in the whole range of speculative philosophy.

It is not only those subjects, however, which come under the notion of *science*, that lead us up through the several stages of generalisation to the ethereal regions of metaphysical speculation; every

branch of human knowledge, if investigated to a similar extent, leads exactly to the same point. Take, for example, the province of the historian, a province which appears at first sight to confine itself entirely to an investigation and a description of external facts. The primary object of the historian, it is true, may be considered simply this ; to discover events as they occurred, and to describe them in the best possible manner ; but the true philosophical historian is far from being content with this. He looks upon the phenomena of human life and activity as the direct result of human nature, as it exists in the world, and seeks to trace them to their proper source in the constitution of the human mind. The subject of government, as it has appeared in the different states and countries of our earth, leads us directly to the deeper question concerning the foundation of man's natural rights ; for all government is constructed upon the primary conception of right or justice, and must be adjudged as fundamentally good or bad according to its agreement or disagreement with it. If we search again into the history of civilisation and learning, or of the arts and sciences, as they have sprung up and made greater or lesser advancement amongst different nations, here, too, we are insensibly led to the study of the human mind. All civilisation is an effect which must spring from certain causes, and the object of the philosophical historian in tracing it, is to point out the influence, which various forms of

government, various features of natural scenery, various modes of religion, and various circumstances in general, have had in stimulating man to exertion in different directions, and towards different objects. History is, in fact, a detail of the various manifestations of mind, as they have been impressed upon the surface of human life; and the philosophical historian will attempt to deduce from the past, those laws of human action, which have heretofore moulded the features of society, and which, we may predict, will under similar circumstances, operate in a similar manner for the future. This whole branch of human knowledge, therefore, leads us inevitably to the study of man, to the investigation of the primary laws of the human mind, and only when it has pursued its inquiries to that point does it attain a high degree of generalisation, and give us a full satisfaction in its results.<sup>1</sup>

To adduce another instance of the intimate connexion that subsists between the various branches to which our mental activity is directed, and speculative philosophy, I would point out that of the fine arts. Here, as in most other subjects, there is

<sup>1</sup> The philosophy of history is almost entirely a science of modern times. It commenced with Jno. Bapt. Vico (born at Naples, 1650), in his "Scienza Nuova;" was further developed by Herder in his "Ideen zur Philos. der Gesch. der Menschheit;" has since received further contributions from Schlegel and the German Idealists; and, lastly, has been reduced to the forms of the "positive philosophy," by Auguste Comte. The term *Sociology* is now coming into use to designate this branch of scientific research. See Mill's "Logic," vol. ii.

a practical, and a theoretical side, the former of which, although it may be successfully pursued by itself, is nevertheless based upon the latter. Poetry may be loved, and may be created by the impulse of an enthusiastic soul, and the exertion of a lively imagination, without any reflection upon the sources from which the poetic fire is kindled ; but the inquiry will still force itself upon us in due time—What is enthusiasm, what is the nature of creative imagination, and what is the ground upon which the pleasure we derive from all such sources depends? The answer to this, it is evident, will lead us into abundant metaphysical inquiries long before we have probed the subject to its complete elucidation. Painting, again, may be cultivated simply by attention to practical rules, especially when there is a natural aptitude for it ; but then the pleasure we derive from it arises mainly from our susceptibility of the emotion of beauty. We ask, therefore, What is Beauty? How is it excited? In what does it consist? Is the highest beauty *real*, and has it ever been actually embodied in nature? or is it *ideal*, and only imaged in the mind? Must the painter strive to copy exactly what exists, or has he to seek a perfection which is only floating within his own mind, and which he must be perpetually endeavouring to transfer from the inner chamber of imagery to the canvass before him? The decision of this point, one way or the other, will give rise to completely different schools of painting. The advocate of the beau-*real* would

never become another Raphael, nor would the advocate of the beau-*ideal* ever form a second Vandyk.

If it be asked, why we should employ our minds in theorising on these different subjects, when the practical application of them can be made without any knowledge whatever of their theory, we answer, because man is formed with a desire to *know*, as well as to *do* and *feel*, because the love of knowledge is an impulse quite as strong as those other impulses which lead more directly to action, and because we can no more be happy without satisfying the former, when it once takes possession of our mind, than we can without satisfying the latter.

If from the fine arts we descend into the pursuits and toils of practical life, here, too, we soon find that we are conducted step by step, as we proceed backward towards first principles, into the region of metaphysics. Our practical life consists, for the most part, in the performance of *duties*. But what is a duty? What claim has it over our conscience, and on what is grounded its obligation? I have duties to perform towards my country. Is patriotism, then, an emotion implanted by nature, and if so, to what extent should I compromise my own natural rights in favour of the community at large? The whole question of the rights of nature, to which we are thus brought, leads us, as we before remarked, into one of the most fruitful of all discussions on man's constitution and position in the present world. I have other duties, moreover, to



perform in social life, and again others which relate simply to my own moral being. But in such cases, what is the ground, and what the rule of morality? To elucidate these questions, we must take the torch of philosophy to our aid, and only when we have traced back the whole theory of our practical life to its philosophical principles, do we find a basis upon which we can rest with any mental satisfaction.

These few instances, perhaps, may be sufficient to elucidate the fact, that all generalisation, whatever be the subject to which it is applied, tends to lead us into philosophical researches, so soon as ever it begins to touch upon first principles. Other arts and sciences aim at particular objects, accomplish particular purposes, and carry on their investigations only to a particular extent. This being accomplished, the end of each is satisfied. Philosophy, on the contrary, seeks the *completion* of our knowledge; it lays bare the hidden foundations upon which all other sciences rest, and weighs the validity of the axioms which they tacitly assume. No sooner do we view these different branches of human knowledge with the eye of the speculative philosopher, than we begin at once to see that the courses of them all are convergent, tending perpetually to one point. Many of the minor channels, after being followed backward for a certain distance, merge into the course of some wider stream. As we go further back the channels become fewer, though, at the same time, wider and deeper; but

still some few remain distinct from each other, and ever exhibit a cloud of darkness enveloping their source, until the philosophic spirit dares to enter the cloud, and trace their course up to the very point where they all unite. On this account, no doubt, philosophy may sometimes incur the charge of vagueness and indistinctness in its operations and results; but instead of joining in this complaint, we should rather admire the courage and intelligence that dare to penetrate into what was before a region of cloud and darkness, that succeed in gaining new glimpses of an unknown land, and that struggle on against almost insuperable difficulties, even at the risk of here and there losing the road, to their great results. Far should we be from regarding it as presumptuous to enter these sacred limits, or, because philosophy is sometimes bewildered in the mazes it attempts to track, denounce its whole attempt as vain and fruitless.

Let us now sum up the results of the foregoing considerations in a few words. Man possesses intellectual powers, the object and constant tendency of which is the acquisition of knowledge. The advancement of knowledge is measured by the power of accurate generalisation, and all generalisation, when sufficiently extensive, brings us to the investigation of first principles, that is, to the region of speculative philosophy. Hence we conclude that the rise of philosophy is *inevitable*, being necessitated by the very nature of human knowledge, and the innate tendency we possess to acquire it.

From this point of view we can now gain a clearer insight into the true idea and real office of philosophy properly so called. Striving as it does to unite all the various objects of mental pursuit, to complete in form the pyramid of human knowledge, to bring even the very foundations thereof to view, it may be regarded as the *science of sciences*, as that which shows the connexion and the basis of all the rest. The intellectual philosophy, accordingly, of any age may be regarded as the *last word* which the reason of that age pronounces, inasmuch as its laws, politics, arts, literature, and to a certain extent its peculiar views of religion also, are but the reflex of the philosophy which is then supreme. Or perhaps it might be more accurate were we to say, that the intellectual spirit of any epoch, that which manifests itself in the various channels of literary and practical life, finds in philosophy its highest expression, and shows there most clearly its real undisguised form.<sup>1</sup>

This will appear more evident if we consider that philosophy places every subject in its most abstract light, and seeks to bring every thing it touches upon into the region of clear and definite thought. Now there is in mankind at large a process of latent thought which is spontaneously produced by the spirit of the age in which they live, but is only seen and acknowledged by the mass in its outward and visible effects. Men, for the most part, view the thoughts and conceptions, by which their minds

<sup>1</sup> Cousin, "Cours de Philosophie"—Introd. Leçon ix.

are governed, only in the peculiar phases which the literature, the arts, the religion of the age assume,—for these are the shrines on which the divinities they worship are represented in a symbolical form. On the other hand, the ideas which can only operate upon the mass of mankind through some external channel, and in some objective form, become to the philosopher strictly subjective. He strips them of all their exterior dress, separates the mere appendages from the essence, and views them, not as something out of himself, but as parts or products of his own individual consciousness. In the case of the former, the subject, which observes, entirely separates itself from the object, which is observed. The power of thought goes forth spontaneously, exerts itself spontaneously, and at length embodies itself unconsciously in various symbols, which are then looked upon as having an independent existence: in the philosopher, this same thought, which had been hitherto spontaneous, becomes reflective, and the distinction of subject and object is destroyed in the complete identity that takes place, when thought becomes the object of its own study and contemplation. It is in philosophy, therefore, that the thought of every age comes to the proper consciousness of itself, and appears stripped of the different dresses in which alone it is recognised by mankind at large.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On this point see Cousin's "Cours de Philosophie"—Introduction, Leçon i.

In every period of the world there are some few great ideas or principles at work, which, though sunk deeply and almost hidden at the very core and centre of the spirit of the age, are yet working themselves outward, and impressing their shapes upon every feature of society. What do we mean when we speak of great problems, which are gradually evolving their own solution in the progressive advancement of human things? Is not the real meaning of such expressions something of this nature: That there is some great thought which is lying at present half unconsciously in the minds of the people, and which is emerging gradually but surely more and more into the light of day? Every age assuredly has some such thought, which appears and reappears in a thousand different forms. It shows itself in the habits and customs which then arise; it shows itself in the spirit of the laws and institutions which are then established; it shows itself in the different schools of the fine arts, which ever take the colouring and type of the age that gives them birth; it shows itself in the literature which is then most ardently pursued; and to no little extent does it show itself in the popular forms of religion, which then gain favour and celebrity. The thought which thus almost unconsciously governs the age, at length comes forth in its purest and most simple form, separated from all the extraneous material with which it is mixed up, by the severe analysis to which it is subjected in the crucible of an en-

lightened philosophy. There is, if we look deep enough, an intellectual cause to be assigned for the customs and manners of society ; there is a psychological ground, from which spring the different forms of law and government ; similar reasons may be found for the rise of the imaginative arts, of the different fields of literary pursuit, and even of the various shades of religious worship ; for there are but few comparatively who, uninfluenced by the spirit of the age, look through all the forms and phraseology even of Christianity itself, and gaze face to face upon the eternal ideas which they embody. It is the spirit of philosophy, therefore, that is to search for the ground of all these multifarious phenomena, to look under the surface for the ideas from which they all spring ; to trace every manifestation of intelligence in human society to those primary laws of our constitution to which they all owe their birth, and to seek thus the completion of our knowledge by laying bare the whole superstructure down to the simple foundation on which it all reposes. Such attempts accordingly we consider to be inevitable, called forth as they are by the natural impulse of the human mind to investigate truth to its most universal and abstract forms, and to discover the primary elements from which all knowledge takes its rise.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It was my hope and intention that the above illustrations should make evident the sense in which I understand the term Philosophy to be properly used. I fear I have not been altogether successful. Dr Chalmers (North Brit. Rev. Feb. 1847) assuming a peculiar defini-

SECT. IV.—*Primary Elements of Human Knowledge.*

The advancement of human knowledge we have already seen to be indicated by the progress of accurate generalisation. The most ordinary ideas of mankind are the most complex, and the effect of the united process of abstraction and generalisation is gradually to simplify them, until we arrive at the ultimate elements of which they consist. We may illustrate this by a reference to the progress of chemical science. The objects of nature by which we are surrounded are extremely complex, and the forms which they assume infinitely diversified. The chemist begins his researches by classifying them under different heads; by noting down certain properties which many in common possess, until he gradually arrives at the knowledge of simpler materials. As his investigation goes on, the analysis becomes more close and accurate, and the ultimate point at which it all tends is to discover the original elements of which the whole material universe consists. In the same manner, the object of the metaphysician is to analyse thought, to reduce the multiplicity of our mental phenomena to a few

tion (that which reduces all philosophy to one small section of it,—namely, Psychology), contends that I have greatly magnified its office. Of course I have, if all I meant to include in it is *mental philosophy*. But no mistake can be greater than to suppose philosophy and psychology to be here taken as identical.

general heads, and thus ultimately to discover the primary elements of which all knowledge consists. Before we enter upon the history of philosophy, therefore, it will be necessary to point out what the primary elements really are, as our classification of the different systems of philosophy will mainly depend upon the view we take of this point.

In deducing these elements, it is not my present intention to go into a full discussion of the question, since this would bring us too rapidly upon the most difficult problems that are to be found in the whole range of metaphysics ; all we shall now do is, simply to indicate in few words the results which have been arrived at by the most acute analysts, and to follow their track until a more clear and correct one shall be pointed out.

Now, in generalising our knowledge, so as to deduce the ultimate elements of which it consists, there are two methods which may be employed. Either we may make a classification of all objective things around us, as being the *material* of our thoughts and feelings, and having reduced them to their most universal heads, regard these as the required elements ; or, on the other hand, we may analyse our consciousness, and having reduced the mental phenomena we find there to the smallest possible number, assume these as the elements from which all the multiplicity of our thoughts proceeds. The one process consists of a classification of the *objects* of our knowledge—the other is a dissection of thought in its *subjective* phases. The former of



these methods, it is well known, was pursued by Aristotle—the first man who undertook the gigantic task of reducing the multiplicity of all the objects of human knowledge to a few general heads—and the result of this attempt was the *ten categories*, which will ever remain a standing monument of his wonderful power, both of analysis and of generalisation.

Perhaps it may seem unnecessary to enumerate anything so universally known as these categories, but we give them here to assist the reader in drawing a comparison between the result of Aristotle's investigations on this point, and that of some authors, who have given other classifications upon different principles. They are as follows :—1. Substance ; 2. Quantity ; 3. Quality ; 4. Relation ; 5. Action ; 6. Passion ; 7. Place ; 8. Time ; 9. Posture ; 10. Habit.

That this enumeration is complete in the sense of being all-embracing, there can be but little doubt ; it appears impossible to imagine the existence of any object of human thought, externally considered, which might not be fairly reduced to one of these heads. Admitting, therefore, the principle upon which Aristotle proceeds, we may regard his classification, not, indeed, as perfect, since a much closer analysis might be made ; but still, as being on the score of completeness eminently successful. So much so, indeed, did it appear to other minds, that no improvement upon it was effected for more than two thousand years.

The intellectual effort, however, which Aristotle put forth to deduce the elements of human knowledge, was renewed by Kant upon the other, or subjective principle. Instead of looking to the outward materials of our knowledge, and seeking the primary elements from an analysis and generalisation of these, he looked to the mind itself, inquired into the fundamental conceptions under which everything external must be viewed, and upon these conceptions constructed a complete table of categories. Aristotle had classified the *matter* of our thoughts, Kant undertook to classify the *forms*: the one deduced the objective, the other the subjective elements in human knowledge. Admitting, as did both, that all our ideas must have their raw material from without, and that this material is put into shape and order by the powers or laws of the human understanding, Aristotle, with his sensational tendency, sought to accomplish his object by investigating the former, while Kant, with his ideal tendency, sought the same object by investigating the latter.

In order, then, to accomplish this purpose, Kant showed that there are three great faculties in man, each of which has its own laws or modes of operation. These are (to use a plain English phraseology)—Sensational-perception, Understanding, and pure Reason. Sensation gives the matter of our notions; Understanding gives the form; while Reason brings unity and connexion to the whole exercise of the understanding, and aims ever at the

infinite, the unconditioned, the absolute. The forms or categories of sensation are two—Time and Space. It is the *where* and the *when* that is determined by this faculty, since everything we perceive must by that very act be placed in some given time, and in some given space. The laws of the *understanding*, which are more peculiarly denominated “Categories,” by Kant, are reduced to *twelve*,—these twelve falling under four general, or head-categories. 1. Under the head of Quantity, we have Unity, Plurality, and Totality; 2. Under the head of Quality, we have Affirmation, Negation, and Limitation; 3. Under the head of Relation, we have Substance, Causality, and Reciprocity; and lastly, Under the head of Modality, are contained Possibility, Actuality, and Necessity. These are, according to Kant, the twelve conceptions in relation to which everything really existing must be viewed. Then, lastly, comes the highest faculty of man, that of pure Reason, the form of which is absolute unity, and which, according as it is directed to substance, or to phenomena, or to the ideal of perfection, leads to the three irreducible ideas—of the Soul (the absolute subject), of the Universe (the totality of all phenomena), and of God (the all-perfect essence). To sum up, then, the whole analysis which Kant gives us of our intellectual nature, or, as he would term them, modes of our intellectual being, we have two for our Sensational faculty, twelve for the Understanding, and three by which the Reason strives after absolute unity in its ideas;

making in all seventeen categories. The fuller explanation of Kant's doctrine of the categories, we must leave till we come to the consideration of the Kantian Philosophy in its proper place.<sup>1</sup>

The influence of Kant in Germany drew the attention of philosophers mainly to the one point, which he had treated with so great skill and acuteness—namely, the determination of the fundamental laws of thought, or the primary elements of our intellectual being. As the analysis became more close, doubts were entertained as to the correctness of his classification. The number of these fundamental laws or primary elements became thus gradually reduced, and the foundations of intellectual science by degrees confined within narrower limits. The history of this process will be pointed out more particularly hereafter; the fruits of it, to which only we can now refer, have been abundantly reaped, and still further matured, by one of the first of living philosophers, M. Cousin, who, with singular depth and clearness, has criticised the labours of Kant, and by the application of all the rigour of more modern analysis, has reduced the whole of the Kantian categories to *two fundamental ideas*.

According to Cousin, then, all our thoughts may

<sup>1</sup> The doctrine of the Categories or fundamental ideas of the human mind, is still the subject of much philosophical discussion. Among the most recent treatises on the subject we may mention an "Essai d'une Nouvelle Théorie sur les Idées fondamentales," par F. Perron, Paris, 1843; also, in German, a learned and somewhat popular work entitled "Geschichte der Kategorienlehre," by F. A. Trendelenburg.

be reduced to the two primitive ideas of *Action* and *Being* ; the one giving the category of causality, the other of substance ; the one implying the relative, the contingent, the particular, the phenomenal ; the other implying the absolute, the necessary, the universal, the infinite. Without entering into the abstruse details, by which the categories of Kant are referred to these heads, it may be sufficient to point out how these two fundamental ideas are deduced, and what they severally contain ; and, perhaps, it is impossible to give this deduction in clearer and more concentrated language than that which has been employed by M. Cousin himself. "The human reason," he says, "in whatever manner it develops itself, whatever it grasps, on whatever it meditates ; whether it stop short with the observation of surrounding nature, or whether it penetrates into the depths of the inward world, conceives of all things under the type of two ideas. If it examines number and quantity, it is impossible for it to see anything there more than unity and multiplicity. The one and the diverse, the one and the multiple, unity and plurality, these are the two elementary ideas of reason, in which every consideration relative to number terminates. If it occupies itself with space, it can only conceive of it under two points of view, those, namely, of bounded or determined space on the one side, of absolute space on the other. If it occupies itself with existence, if it views things under the sole respect that *they are*, it can only conceive of the idea of absolute

existence, or the idea of relative existence. Does it think of time? It conceives either of time as determined, (time properly so called,) or of time *in itself*, absolute time—namely, eternity; in the same manner as absolute space is immensity. Does it think of forms? It conceives either of a form that is finite, determined, limited, measurable; or of something which is the principle of this form, which is neither measurable, nor limited, nor finite; in a word, it conceives of the infinite. If it thinks of movement or action, it can only conceive of limited action, and the source of limited action; of powers and causes that are bounded, relative and secondary, on the one hand, or of an absolute power, a first cause, on the other, beneath which, in respect of action, it is not possible to seek or to find anything. If it thinks of all exterior and interior phenomena, which develop themselves around us—of this whole moving scene of events and accidents of every kind; there, again, it can only conceive of two things, the manifestation and appearance, as simple appearance and simple manifestation; or of that which, while it appears, retains something that does not pass away in the appearing—that is, of being in itself; or, to take the language of science, we here conceive of phenomenon and substance. In thought again, it conceives of thoughts which refer to this thing or that, which may be or may not be; and it conceives of the principle of thought in itself—the principle which exists, without doubt, in all our relative thoughts, but which is never exhausted. In the

moral world, it conceives of certain things as beautiful or good ; and then it inevitably brings there also these same categories of the finite and infinite, which become now the perfect and the imperfect, the beau-real and the beau-ideal, virtues with the miseries of reality, or the saint in his elevation and unsullied purity. These, as it appears to me," adds M. Cousin, "are all the elements of human reason. The outward world, the intellectual world, the moral world, all are subjected to these two ideas. Reason only develops and can only develop itself on these two conditions. The great division of ideas now universally accepted, is that into contingent and necessary ideas. This division, in a more circumscribed point of view, is the reflex of that at which I stop, and which you can represent to yourselves under the formula of unity and multiplicity, of substance and phenomenon, of absolute cause and relative causes, of the perfect and imperfect, of the finite and the infinite."<sup>1</sup>

Such is M. Cousin's ultimate reduction of the primary elements of all our knowledge. As, however, the category of causality contains in it two very important and very distinct ideas, it may be as well to give another and a simpler *deduction* of these great fundamental conceptions of the human mind ; one which may, perhaps, place the whole question in a somewhat clearer light.

The first and most obvious idea that we possess within our consciousness, is that of our own exis-

<sup>1</sup> *Vid.* "Cours de l'Histoire de la Philosophie," Introd. Lect. iv.

tence. The notion of *self*, or of *the me*, as it has been so often and so significantly termed, must necessarily be a primitive and a universal notion, since it is implied in every perception we experience, in every thought we create, in a word, in every mental act we perform. We all feel conscious that there is something we call *ourselves*, which possesses and can exert power, and to which, as a fundamental unity, all the multiplicity of our thoughts and feelings are to be referred. This power, however, or energy, which we variously call the will, the acting and knowing principle, or *the me*, is not an infinite and absolute power. On the contrary, it finds itself bounded, resisted, and opposed on every side. There is not an effort we put forth, but we find it limited and circumscribed by some counter force, which we are conscious really *exists*, and which acts upon us independently of ourselves. No sooner do we become cognisant of self, and the power we possess of willing and acting, than we find all around a world that offers resistance to us at every point, together with phenomena and laws that often seem directly in contradiction to our own volitions, and which, if not attended to, would instantly involve us in suffering and death. To the idea of self there stands opposed, therefore, the idea of something which is *not self*; or, as it has been otherwise expressed, *the me* finds around it other existences that are separate from us, and which, therefore, we may term the *not-me*, as being the



most general phrase by which it can be denominated. The one of these ideas, indeed, supposes and involves the other. We could have no distinct notion of self, but as opposed to, and separate from, other existences around us ; nor could we have any notion of an external world, but as something which is opposed to and separate from ourselves.

These, then, are two of the most fundamental ideas of the human mind : that of self on the one side, with its intelligence and its liberty ; that of a physical world on the other, with its *power* of inertia—a world to whose laws we are to some extent subjected, and which we have, by mingled obedience and resistance, to bend and mould to our necessities and desires. So far, however, we are not yet out of the region of the finite. The me, as we have seen, is limited in its actions and volitions by the not-me : it is a finite cause, that can be resisted and changed variously by other causes which act around it. Nature, *too*, is finite. It can only oppose us to a limited extent, and we can in our turn resist and modify it. Both of these ideas, therefore, come under the notion of the relative, the limited, the bounded, the finite, the phenomenal ; and both equally belong to the category of causality, the former being a voluntary or intentional cause, the other a blind and fatal one.

These two general ideas, however, which we have thus placed under the category of causality, by no means exhaust all the materials of thought that

exist in the human mind.<sup>1</sup> Just in the same manner as *the me* implies the notion of a *not-me* from which it is distinguished, and by the perception of which we become conscious of our own separate individuality in the whole universe of things around us ;—so the notion of the limited and the finite implies the correlative one of the unlimited and the infinite. Let any one attentively examine his own inmost thoughts, and he will find that there can be no distinct idea whatever in the mind, without the implication of something else from which it is separated, and to which it is opposed. Every distinct idea must be *defined* ; that is, it must be *bounded off* from other ideas, the existence of which ideas is accordingly supposed by the very fact of definition. Take the idea of *relative*, and see whether it would convey any notion to the mind whatever, unless the idea of *absolute* existed as that to which it is opposed. What, again, were our notion of finite, without the correlative one of infinite ; or what of multiplicity, without that of unity ? Now, if we take the category of causality in any of the different phases

<sup>1</sup> The division of *the me* and the *not-me*, would certainly appear to be exhaustive at first sight, and with regard to finite existence it is so. But when we come to consider absolute existence, we can no more refer it to the one than to the other. Self and nature both lie embosomed in the infinite ;—*the me* and the *not-me* equally partake of the absolute in their essence, and it is in this view of the case, that to these two finite conceptions we add the idea of the infinite, as that in which they both subsist. To *include* the absolute in the *not-me*, as some propose, would be to *exclude* an absolute ground from the idea of humanity. This we cannot admit.

under which we have presented it, we find that in every case there is a correlative and an opposed notion, which we must place in what we have termed the category of *substance*; *i. e.* of the infinite and unchangeable, or of being *per se*. If, *e. g.*, we consider the world of phenomena, we are necessitated by our reason itself to suppose and admit some *substance*, in which these phenomena adhere, and which remains ever essentially the same amidst all the changes that may appear on the surface. If we think of *cause*, we are unable to imagine it without admitting the existence of some *being*, from which the power, variously displayed, emanates. If we think of events, we cannot conceive of them without *time*, the one immeasurable duration in which all events exist. If we think of objects as they lie in space around us, we are obliged to refer them to a universal space that envelops all the visible in its vast embrace. In all these instances the two categories penetrate each other, so that the one notion only becomes possible by the opposition with which the other throws it out before our view.

The same primary ideas, which we have deduced by the foregoing process, arise equally before our view when we confine our attention to the subjective world, and analyse the phenomena of our own mental faculties. The mind of man is the mirror of universal nature, and whatever exists accessible to us in the whole region of being, material or spiritual, we find imaged in us with the most per-

fect accuracy. Man possesses a sensational faculty ; and to what does this point us ? Manifestly to the objective existence of an external world, the varied forms of which are, by means of this faculty, made accessible to our own minds. Man possesses, moreover, intelligence ; he possesses the power of volition, he possesses impulses, desires, affections ; and all these phenomena imply the existence of *a subject* to which they alike belong. Intelligence is *my* intelligence ; it is the comprehension of things as I have classified and generalised them for my own use and convenience. Volition is *my* volition ; and so also are the various desires and impulses *my own* subjective feelings, those which I myself experience, and which no one else can experience precisely in the same manner. Here, then, we find our own faculties pointing out to us by their very constitution, the existence of two realities ; in the one case, that of the being I term *self*, in the other case, that of an external world which is distinguished from *self*, and opposed to it. In both cases, however, we are kept down within the region of the finite and the relative : for neither sensation, nor understanding, nor our desires or volitions, lead us directly to the region of the absolute and eternal.

If we look a little further, however, we find that man has the faculty of perceiving absolute and necessary truth, as well as that which is relative and finite ; that there are ideas within us which come neither through the channel of the senses nor are dependent upon the peculiar constitution of our own

minds, but which are the clear reflection within us of absolute and eternal realities. In the case of sensation, I perceive objects which might or might not be; objects which may yet be changed and modified in a thousand different ways. In simple understanding, I observe relations which might or which might not exist,—relations, perhaps, which I have artificially made for my own use, and which I can as easily destroy. In every case of volition, the resolution to which I come is strictly *my own*, *i.e.* the fruit of my own will. But far otherwise is it with everything belonging to pure and absolute reason. Take, for instance, any axiomatic truth of pure mathematics. It is not through mere sensation that you have arrived at it; neither is it an *arbitrary relation* of your own production; nor is it conceived of in pursuance of any resolution of your own will. Try as you may, and you cannot alter the conceptions of pure reason even to an infinitesimal degree. My sensations are my own, and my volitions are my own; but truth, absolute truth, is not mine nor yours, neither is it within the bounds of our possible belief, that it should be different to any rational mind from what it is to ours. Absolute truth has no element of *personality* in it, and our reason, therefore, as far as it grasps the necessary and the eternal, is strictly speaking an impersonal reason. It is the reflection within ourselves of eternal things, as they are—an emanation or ray of the infinite reason, which governs the universe by the laws of unerring wisdom and truth,

and which, as far as it is manifested at all, is manifested to every mind alike.<sup>1</sup>

Here, then, we are led again to the same virtual conclusion, that the three great and primary elements of all our knowledge are, firstly, the idea of our own individual existence, or of finite mind in general; secondly, the idea of nature; and, thirdly, the idea of the absolute and eternal, as manifested in the pure conceptions of our impersonal reason. Every notion of our intellectual life, we believe, may be traced to one of these sources, and we regard them, therefore, as the primitive elements of all our knowledge,—starting-points from which every true system of intellectual philosophy must take its rise. It is to the method, then, by which the different philosophical systems have grounded themselves upon these fundamental ideas, that we must now briefly revert.

#### SECT. V.—*Systems of Philosophy.*

A synthetical system of intellectual philosophy has for its object,—first, a complete enumeration of all the primary elements of our knowledge; and secondly, the expansion of these simple elements into all the multiplicity of our ideas and conceptions, however varied and complicated they may

<sup>1</sup> To comprehend the impersonality of reason aright, the reader should study Cousin's doctrine of "pure apperception," which he will find clearly stated in the 13th Lecture of his "*Cours de Phil. sur le Fondement du Vrai, du Beau, et du Bien.*"

appear. Philosophical systems, therefore, will differ amongst themselves, according as they hold up any one of those three fundamental ideas, which we have deduced, most prominently to our view, and make it either the *chief* or the *sole* element from which all our other ideas are derived. Systems of philosophy have accordingly ever taken three great directions, corresponding to the three fundamental ideas, upon one or other of which they have severally been founded. These three primary directions of the philosophic spirit, we must first of all elucidate, and then show the other or secondary directions which arise from them.

The most vivid and striking facts of our consciousness are unquestionably those which we term sensations. To them the mind is sure at first to bend its attention, and as the progress of investigation goes on, it discovers an immense multitude of notions over and above our simple perceptions, the germ of which must undoubtedly be traced to the sensational faculty. Physical science, for example, in all its branches, and every kind of knowledge, indeed, that is connected with the objects of the external world, arise directly from the analysis, classification, and general investigation of those numberless materials, which come through the channel of our sensations. So far the progress of what we shall term the sensational philosophy is perfectly legitimate and correct, and has given rise from time to time to splendid results. Many philosophers, however, absorbed in the multitude, the

variety, and the grandeur of the fruits of physical science, have lost sight of everything else—have made the senses the sole fountains of human knowledge, and built up a whole metaphysical system upon the basis of external nature. Such, in fact, was the philosophy of the French Encyclopædists, and such, *in tendency*, was the philosophy of Locke.

A precisely contrary direction, on the other hand, has arisen from a too close and partial analysis of *self*. In this analysis our volitions, our desires, and the subjective laws of our reason and intelligence, were very properly and plainly separated from the whole region of sensation; but after a time, when attention became entirely concentrated upon the inherent powers of the individual mind, the external world itself was made to depend upon its subjective laws, and there resulted a whole philosophical system based upon the one notion of *self*, with its native and exhaustless energies. Such is idealism,—true and beautiful in its results, so long as it investigates what are, properly speaking, the innate faculties of the human mind, but false and delusive when it would go a step too far, and draw from within what a more accurate philosophy shows to arise from an objective world around us. Such, in its fullest extent, was the philosophy of Berkeley in England, and of Fichte in Germany; such, in its tendency, was Kantism; and such, in its first and better movement, was the system with which Dr Reid honoured and enlightened his country.

The third element of our intellectual life remains,



that, namely, which appears under the varied forms of the substantial, the eternal, the immeasurable, the infinite ; in a word, the idea of being itself in which the finite mind and finite nature are both equally grounded ; and accordingly, we look around now for a philosophy, which answers to this fundamental notion. What, then, we inquire, must necessarily be the character of such a philosophy, when the world of phenomena is sunk in the profounder idea of substance, when the varied phases of our own consciousness are lost in the depths of Being *per se*,—when subject and object are both absorbed in one prior and eternal principle,—the Temporal lost in the Eternal, the Finite in the Infinite. This philosophy has been realised in different forms under the one idea of *Pantheism*. Such, in the ancient world, was substantially the doctrine of the Eleatics ; such, in modern times, was the doctrine of Spinoza ; and such, in a more refined and perfect form, are now the respective philosophies of Schelling and Hegel. As, however, the pantheistic scheme is properly idealistic (inasmuch as the material world is virtually denied), we may include the two latter of the three systems I have pointed out under the general term of *Idealism* ; and if we wish to make a distinction between them, we may term the one subjective idealism (that which absorbs everything in the subject—*the me*), and the other objective idealism, or the doctrine which reduces everything to the one infinite, unchangeable, objective substance or being, of which, and in which, all

things consist. In this way we shall have simply two main tendencies in philosophy; that of sensationalism on the one hand, and idealism on the other.<sup>1</sup>

That the philosophic spirit, however, should remain content with the struggles of two opposite schools, both giving opposite conclusions, and both running into extravagant results, was a thing in its

<sup>1</sup> An acute writer in the Prospective Review (No. viii.) has expressed surprise that I should include the two categories of The me and the Absolute under the one *title* of Idealism. I remark, in reply to his observations, that the classification is a matter of *convenience*, and not at all intended, as he supposes, to merge the two *ideas* into one. The terms subjective and objective *idealism*, have long been applied to these two movements; so that I am merely retaining the well-known phraseology of the German schools. The reason of my retaining the classification is this—that in our common philosophical language *sensations* and *ideas* represent the two great sources of our knowledge. We have an outward source—nature; and an inward source—*pure ideas*, which terminate on the side of the *will* in self—on the side of the *reason* in God. Sensationalism, accordingly, is the philosophy built upon the former—subjective and objective idealism is that built upon the two latter. To say that “the proper association of the absolute is with the not-me,” (p. 561,) either throws the category of the me into a false position, *by making it opposed to the absolute in a sense in which nature is not opposed to it*; or commits the same error which is wrongly attributed to myself, namely, that of throwing two distinct terms, nature and the absolute, under one category—that of the not-me. And yet a little further on (p. 563,) it is proposed to deduce the absolute, alike from the me and the not-me, when viewed not as *cause* but as *condition*. To associate the absolute with the not-me, and then to deduce it immediately from both categories together, appears to me an instance of “*unaccountable simplicity*,” at least equal to that which the writer attributes to myself in uniting the me and the not-me under the head of idealism. If I have not caught his meaning, I must plead as excuse, that his style seems expressly adapted to hide the *thoughts* behind a dazzling brilliancy of ornamental illumination.

nature impossible. The contradictions thus thrown up to view naturally give rise to a critical philosophy, the object of which is to examine the grounds and pretensions of every other system, to check the progress and arraign the conclusions of dogmatism, and to get nearer the True by denying and overturning the False. The philosophy which thus aims at detecting falsehood without attempting to build up any system of truth, we term *Scepticism* : not that contemptible species of scepticism which, as practised by some, is nothing more than a secret abhorrence of human reason, and a disguised misanthropy ; but that which honestly aims after truth by means of exposing error wherever it may lurk. As in the case of sensationalism and idealism, therefore, so also in scepticism there is a good side and a bad ; the one seeking to establish truth, by separating from it all untruth, the other seeking to lay truth as well as error alike prostrate at the foot of an obstinate and irrational unbelief. Such, then, is the natural result of the struggle between an extreme sensationalism on the one hand, and an extreme idealism on the other.

That scepticism, however, should be the culminating point of the philosophic spirit, and that the human mind should rest satisfied with the ultimate conclusion, that the highest wisdom is to doubt, were altogether inconceivable. Sceptical philosophy may be invaluable as an *instrument*, which helps us on the road to truth by dissipating fond delusions ; but the mind can only repose at last in *positive*, or,

as we may term them, *dogmatical* results. What, then, is the next step to which the human mind advanced after sensationalism, idealism, and scepticism had exhausted their resources and left it in doubt? The resource, we answer, in which the mind last of all takes refuge, is *Mysticism*. Reason and reflection have apparently put forth all their power, and ended in uncertainty. The mystic thereupon rises to view, and says to the rest of the philosophers around him,—Ye have all alike mistaken the road, ye have sought for truth from a totally incorrect source, and entirely overlooked the one divine element within you, from which alone it can be derived. Reason is imperfect, it halts and stumbles at every step, when it would penetrate into the deeper recesses of pure and absolute truth. But look within you; is there not a spiritual nature there, that allies you with the spiritual world; is there not an enthusiasm which arises in all its energy, when reason grows calm and silent; is there not a light that envelops all the faculties, if you will only give yourself up to your better feelings, and listen to the voice of the God that speaks and stirs within? To this source, then, the mystic looks for a knowledge that far transcends the feeble results of our reflective faculty, and in which he would lay the basis of the highest and the truest philosophy.

In mysticism, however, as well as in the other systems I have adduced, there is undoubtedly a mixture of truth and error. It is quite possible,

amidst the cold abstractions of reason, to lose sight of that inward impulse which shows itself in the flashes of genius, in the spontaneous efforts of the imagination, and in the ardent aspirations of man's religious faculty. Every part of our intellectual life, we must remember, develops itself in its free and spontaneous, as well as it does in its conscious and reflective movements; and often the efforts of our spontaneous being have in them greater freshness and vigour than those of our calmer and more reflective. The benefit, then, which we owe to mysticism is, that it recalls our attention again and again to the *spontaneous* working of our highest faculties; that it points out to us the lofty emotions to which this working often gives rise; that it withdraws us from absorbing our whole attention in logical forms and processes, and points out to us the real and veritable existence of a spiritual world with which we are all closely connected, to whose laws we are all subjected, and without which our higher reason, our instinctive faith, and our fondest aspirations, would be mockery and delusion. On the other hand, mysticism is perhaps the readiest of all philosophies to fall into abuse, and to run into endless extravagances. Once let the enthusiastic element absorb the reflective, or an implicit faith be reposed in our inner sensibility, and no bounds are sufficient to mark out the delusions to which we become subject, and the wild extravagances to which the mind will resign itself. Once establish the principle, that implicit credence must

be given to *feeling* in its varied impulses, and every strong inward suggestion may become the whispering of some celestial spirit; every vivid idea the appearance of some vision from another world; and the natural impulses of an energetic soul, become soon transformed into the ravings of religious fanaticism. Such is mysticism in its nature and origin, and such also both in its healthy and its deleterious results.<sup>1</sup>

In reviewing the progress of these four philosophical tendencies, we cannot fail to make the observation, that they all owe their origin to some correct idea, and all succeed in eliciting some fragments of truth that would otherwise, in all probability, have been either neglected or concealed. This consideration lies at the foundation of another school of philosophy which may follow one or other of these four directions, as the case may be, to a certain extent; but which, seeing in them all only the different movements of the human reason as it progresses towards the unfolding of truth, rejects in each one that which may appear extravagant or incorrect, and builds up the residuum of truth,

<sup>1</sup> The reader who wishes to see these four tendencies of the philosophic spirit more fully explained and proved by an appeal to the testimony of the universal history of philosophy, will find the whole question admirably treated in Victor Cousin's "Cours de l'Histoire de la Philosophie," Lectures iv. to xii. The only imperfection we would point out in his mode of treating the subject is, that he has represented the four tendencies too much as four distinct philosophies existing in every age, rather than as so many prevailing influences or predispositions.

from whatever source derived, into a new and more complete system. Such is briefly the birth and the aim of Eclecticism; a school of philosophy which, though modest in its pretensions, and tolerant in its tone, is singularly extensive in its researches and safe in its results.

With this brief review of the philosophical tendencies which obtain in our own age, as they have more or less in every other, we shall be better enabled to observe and to estimate their various manifestations in the last two or three centuries, and better prepared to mark generally the characteristics and tendencies of speculative philosophy in these our days.

# PART I.

## ON THE PROXIMATE SOURCES OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

### CHAPTER I.

#### ON THE PROGRESS OF SENSATIONALISM FROM THE PERIOD OF BACON TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

##### SECT. I.—*Commencement of Modern Philosophy. Bacon and Hobbes.*

IN commencing our brief review of the sources from which the Philosophy of the nineteenth century has been drawn, with the age of Bacon, we are, in fact, beginning almost at the very first dawn of the modern philosophical spirit. There are only two great eras in the history of metaphysics, the ancient and the modern; whatever attempts may seem not exactly to belong to either of these, consist only of the few steps which were necessary to aid the transition from the one to the other. The scholastic age produced nothing more than a renewal, with some peculiar modifications, of ancient philosophy. That this was really the case, is evident from



the spirit it evinced,—the objects it aimed at,—the authority to which it delighted to bow. Before any *new* philosophy could be originated, it was necessary that this whole system, which had held the minds of men for so many centuries in its grasp, should be combated, and in some measure overthrown; that the fetters, which had been imposed upon the human reason, should be gradually broken off, and freedom thus given it to breathe a more genial intellectual atmosphere. This necessity began to be practically realised about the middle of the fifteenth century, and during the sixteenth was vigorously acted up to. Scholasticism (derived almost entirely from one branch of the ancient philosophy, namely, the Peripatetic) was combated during that period, with weapons derived from another and opposite school—that of the old Academy; so that the ancient contest between Aristotle and Plato was virtually revived upon the arena of modern history.

The whole of the period, indeed, which intervened between the crumbling of the edifice erected by the industry of the schoolmen, and the age of Bacon, was chiefly occupied with the revival and the further modification of the most celebrated systems of the ancient world. The authority of Aristotle being undermined, and no modern school having as yet appeared, the only resource left was to return to those other masters of antiquity who had been comparatively neglected, and to attempt the reconstruction of their various principles and reasonings

into a fresh form, better suited to the altered cast and spirit of the age. Of all these ancient masters, Plato, of course, stood first and foremost, and whatever attempts were made either to introduce a more ideal philosophy than that of the schools, or to advance any of those numerous systems of theosophy and magic which abounded in the twilight of European civilisation, ostensibly grounded themselves upon the authority of the old Academy.<sup>1</sup> Some there were who, less intense in their opposition to the scholastic method, revived the Peripatetic philosophy in its ancient and original form;<sup>2</sup> and even the doctrine of the Stoics made a temporary reappearance on the stage, although it played but a brief and subordinate part.<sup>3</sup>

Whilst these ancient doctrines were being thus recalled from their long and silent repose, there began to appear, in conjunction with them, some few attempts at independent thinking. Peter Ramus made a bold endeavour to recast the whole art and science of logic; Telesius and Campanella to reform the study of physical science; while Francis Patri-

<sup>1</sup> The Platonic philosophy was patronised by the Medicis at Florence, as being more favourable to the cultivation of elegant literature than the jargon of the Aristotelian school. Nicolaus Cusanus, Marsilius Ficinus, and John Picus of Mirandula, were amongst the foremost of these new Platonics. On these, see Hallam's "Introduction to the Literature of Europe," vol. i. See also Tennemann's "Grundriss," p. 305, *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Peter Pomponatius was the head of the new Peripatetics in Italy, and Melancthon, the Reformer, in Germany.

<sup>3</sup> Lipsius and Heinsius advocated a modification of the Stoical philosophy.

tius and Giordano Bruno ventured so far as to offer to the world some new and independent theories on subjects more strictly metaphysical.<sup>1</sup> All these attempts, however, were extremely indefinite.—There was no fixed point of departure from which philosophic investigation should take its rise, no settled objects at which it should aim, and no definite method according to which it should be conducted. Even astronomy itself, although it made some advances owing to the fresh stimulus then given to mathematical studies, yet was crippled in its progress for want of employing the true principles by which all physical investigations ought to be carried on. There needed some master mind who should be daring enough to trample upon the sacredness of ancient and established authority, acute enough to show the *true* objects of all philosophy, and powerful enough to furnish a new organum, and dig, as it were, a new channel, in which the philosophic spirit of the world should flow.

Two such minds arose, both of gigantic powers and almost inexhaustible resources. Each of them applied his whole strength to aid the work of reformation; and their combined influence succeeded in turning the stream of all scientific investigation into the two main directions, which it has been pursuing more or less ever since. The first of these was Lord Bacon; the next in the order, both of

<sup>1</sup> The English reader will find some account of these in Enfield's abridgement of Brucker. For a far better account see Hallam's "Introduction to the Literature of Europe," vol. ii. chap. 3. A life of Bruno has just appeared in France.

time and influence, was Descartes ; the two together must, therefore, be regarded as forming the epoch which gave at once a final close to the ancient philosophy, and its first decided form to the new. Different as were the minds of these two great men in themselves, different as were their respective labours, and opposite as were, in many respects, the results at which they arrived, yet the writings of both were marked by one and the same great characteristic, namely, by the *spirit of method*. The most important works of Bacon, it will be remembered, were the “*Instauratio Magna*,” and the “*Novum Organum* ;” those of Descartes were his “*Dissertatio de Methodo*,” and his “*Meditationes de Primâ Philosophiâ*.” The fruitlessness of the ancient logic, as an instrument of discovery, had been abundantly proved by past experience, and the watchword which these two great thinkers of their age both uttered, and which has been ever since the guiding principle of all philosophy, was—ANALYSIS. Bacon, who gave his attention chiefly to the direction and improvement of physical science, taught to analyse *nature*, while Descartes, who aimed rather at grounding all human knowledge upon its ultimate principles, instructed how to analyse *thought*. All modern philosophy, therefore, whether it arise from the Baconian or the Cartesian point of view, bears upon it the broad outline of the analytic method. It matters not whether it be the outer or the inner world to which its investigations apply, in each case it teaches us to observe and analyse

*facts*, to collect instances, and upon such observation to ground our knowledge of laws and principles. In this alone consists the unity of modern science, and from this arises its broad distinction from that of the ancient world. Every natural philosopher since Bacon has grounded his success upon an induction of the facts of the outward world ; and every metaphysician, since Descartes, has advanced onwards in his department of knowledge by analysing the facts of our inward consciousness.

It might, perhaps, be supposed that this fundamental unity of procedure ought to have given similar results, but such was far from being the case. Bacon, by concentrating his chief attention upon nature, and applying his new method or organum mainly to its interpretation, gave to his philosophy an empirical tendency, which by degrees conferred far too exclusive a value upon outward observation, and led his followers to underrate the importance of abstract ideas, and their due explication, as a means of advancing the interests of true philosophy : in a word, he laid the foundation of the modern sensationalism. Descartes, looking more deeply beneath the phenomenal world, and with an intense power of reflection, gazing upon the mind itself as the instrument and medium by which all truth is perceived, gave a new impetus to the rationalistic method of philosophising, and thus laid the basis of the modern idealism. The great question which both sought to investigate, was that of the true ground and source of human knowledge ; they both

alike aimed at bringing system and unity into the varied and disjointed learning of their age ; they both pointed out a “*prima philosophia*” from which all science must take its rise ; but, with the same objects in view, they differed widely in their conclusions. The English philosopher regarded experience as the ultimate basis on which the superstructure of our knowledge must rest, while the French reformer traced it all back to those innate ideas and principles which, he affirmed, we have prior to, and independent of, any experience whatever. In a future chapter we shall follow the results of Cartesianism to the nineteenth century ; our present object is, to trace Bacon’s experimental philosophy down to the same period, *so far as it has borne upon what are more strictly called metaphysical investigations.*

And, first, we may remark that the influence of Bacon upon the progress of *speculative* philosophy was for the most part *indirect*. A few pages comparatively, would suffice to contain everything he wrote of a strictly metaphysical character. The *spirit* of his whole philosophy, however, was such as could not fail to leave an indelible impression upon every subject lying within the range of human research. In his early life, Bacon had studied the Aristotelian philosophy as it was then taught in the “schools,” and appears, while yet comparatively young in years, not only to have become convinced of its uselessness as a method of discovery, but also to have laid the basis of his new organon. From

these high thoughts he emerged into the toils of active duty, and devoted the extraordinary powers with which he was endowed to the service of his country in the department of law and government. A life thus spent could not but give a strong practical turn to his mind, and must have aided in lending to his philosophy a tone, very different from that which would have resulted from so many years of calm and solitary meditation. Retiring as he did from the court and the senate-house into his study, from the busy scenes of political life to the pursuit of philosophical truth, he could hardly fail of becoming more and more convinced of the practical uselessness of the scholastic logic to a mind that requires sagacity in seizing analogies, and needs experience in collecting facts. He saw that in ordinary cases, where we have to deal with mankind, the keenest logic could not supply the place of accurate observation; and proceeded, with that comprehensiveness of mind for which he was remarkable, to generalise his views, until he evolved the conclusion, that pure scientific knowledge, as well as all other of a more ordinary and practical kind, must take its start from a diligent observation of facts.

The praise of the "Inductive method" is now in every one's mouth—we naturally ask, therefore, what is this method, as Bacon left it? That it cannot consist simply in observing a number of particulars, and then predicating any quality, which we observe in each, of the whole class, is evident; for this would

make a very small extension to our knowledge of nature, where but few particulars, comparatively speaking, are accessible. There must be a fundamental conviction lying at the base of all our investigation of natural phenomena, that under similar circumstances the same antecedents will be followed by the same consequents ; so that from a few observations a wide conclusion can be drawn. But a mere observation of facts, even grounded upon this conviction of the uniformity of nature's laws, Bacon still thought insufficient ; for it had in truth been practised centuries before he announced the "*No-vum Organum*." His great object was, first, to remove out of the road the obstacles which tended to impede the progress of science ; and then so to systematise the rules and principles of induction, as to supersede the *guesses* of experience, and arrive by a sure and rapid road at the discovery of truth. To accomplish this, says Bacon, we must first collect a *natural history* ; that is, whatever be the subject we intend to investigate, we must first set down all the facts we can gain upon it. Having done this we must classify these into tables, so that we may expunge those which are useless to the question, and gather the "vintage" of those which are really significant. These significant facts are further to be scrutinised with respect to their *relative* value and import, and to be illustrated, wherever it is practicable, by actual experiments. This being done, the law of the phenomena or "*latens processus*," if *causes* be the object of our search, and the form or



“*latens schematismus*,” if the *constitution* of bodies be our search, will at once begin to appear. Thus our knowledge must rise from the bare facts, as they are presented to the senses, upwards, through different degrees of generalisation, till the most general form thereof is ascertained, and the top stone of the pyramid laid upon it.<sup>1</sup>

This, then, being in brief the Baconian *method*, in what light are we to estimate it? Its many excellencies all have admitted to be unquestionable. Its primary care to clear away prejudices,<sup>2</sup> and *make silence within* in order to listen for truth, was conceived in the loftiest spirit of sound wisdom. Its constant inculcation of observation and experiment overturned all those false attempts at *construing* nature on *a priori* principles, which had rendered the vastest exertions of many mighty minds entirely nugatory. Its infinite effort to scrutinise facts, and

<sup>1</sup> Bacon's first work was “The Advancement of Learning.” In this his ideas respecting the reform of philosophy were somewhat clearly sketched out. He next announced the “*Instauratio Magna*,” the plan of which, in six parts, may be said to include all his philosophical writings. In the treatise “*De Augmentis Scientiarum*” (an expansion of the “*Advancement*”) we have a complete review of the different branches of human knowledge, as introductory to the whole system. In the “*Novum Organum*,” or second part, we have the *method* of scientific investigation propounded. The third part of the plan was the “*Sylva Sylvarum*,” or Natural History, published posthumously, which was to supply facts. The fourth, fifth, and six parts, termed respectively “*Scala Intellectus*,” “*Anticipationes Philosophiæ*,” and “*Philosophia Secunda*,” are wanting. See his “*Distributio Operis*,” placed at the beginning of his philosophical writings. Vol. vii. of his *Works*, London, Baynes, 1824.

<sup>2</sup> *Idola*—false appearances not Idols. *Vid.* Hallam, vol. ii. p. 408, &c.

weigh their relative value, shows us how jealously we are to watch the accuracy of all our actual observations, and how patiently estimate their signification; while its recommendation to investigate the more occult processes and forms of things, urges us on to study nature even beyond the limits to which mere outward observation can reach. But, perhaps, the most valuable and original part of Bacon's method, is that in which he points out the necessity of a *gradual ascent* in the process of generalisation, in order that we may arrive, at length, at the highest point of human research. "Duæ viæ sunt," such are his own words, "atque esse possunt ad inquirendam et inveniendam veritatem. Altera a sensu et particularibus advolat ad axiomata maxime generalia, atque ex iis principiis eorumque immotâ veritate judicat, et invenit axiomata media; atque hæc via in usu est. Altera a sensu et particularibus excitat axiomata ascendendo continenter et gradatim, ut ultimo loco perveniatur ad maxime generalia, quæ via vera est sed intentata." One of the main defects in the study of natural philosophy, previous to Bacon, was the constant effort to rise from a few *particular* facts to the highest generalisations. These efforts Bacon terms "*anticipationes naturæ*," and points out as above the existence of these "*axiomata media*," which must always serve as stepping-stones to the reason in its arduous path to the summit of the pyramid.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Vid.* Whewell's "*Philosophy of Induction*," vol. ii. p. 395.

Such are the excellencies of Bacon's method; but it has also its defects. First of all, there can be little doubt but that Bacon over-estimated the real value of his new organum, as it regards the discovery of truth. He thought it so powerful an instrument as almost to supersede the value of philosophical genius, and to reduce all minds nearly to the same level.<sup>1</sup> In this he certainly underrated the necessity of that wondrous sagacity (as displayed in Newton) which seizes analogies, and puts us, by a kind of intuitive foresight, on the right road for the true interpretation of facts.<sup>2</sup> This led him again to lay more stress upon the arrangement of the facts themselves, than upon the elucidation of those rational *conceptions* by which alone they can be explained and generalised. It must be admitted, however, that this defect might have been in great measure corrected, had he completed the plan marked out in the last three parts of the "Instauratio Magna." Another main defect in the Baconian system was, its almost entire neglect of *deduction*. It did not take into consideration, that a sagacious mind may often rise, all at once, *per saltum*, to a general principle, and then reason downwards so as to *deduce* those "axiomata media," in which our real knowledge mainly consists. This error, Mr Mill conjectures, might have arisen from Bacon's ignorance and disparagement of mathematical

<sup>1</sup> Nov. Org. I. Aph. 61.

<sup>2</sup> *Vid.* Mr Macaulay's article in the Edinburgh Review, No. 132.

science.<sup>1</sup> Lastly, the method was defective, and necessarily so, in that practical wisdom which results from a long acquaintance with the actual processes of philosophical research. The great benefit Bacon conferred upon the world arose from the *spirit of his writings* as a whole—from the admirable wisdom which they exhibited—and the impressive manner in which they inculcated upon all, the duty of repressing narrow prejudices on the one hand, and a too wide ambition on the other. Added to this, he saw distinctly the existence of the two elements of all human knowledge—the Sensational and the Ideal, and perceived that science can only be constructed by the due combination of them both; the facts given by the one being interpreted through the conceptions furnished by the other. To Bacon, therefore, we must attribute the honour of having first sketched out the true order of philosophical research, and foreseen the splendid results which its application has educed in the increase of all the comforts and conveniences of human life, as well as in the general progression afforded by it to the moral and intellectual culture of mankind. It was under the deep impression of the truth and power of his views, that he announced them as the “great instauration” which was to introduce a new era into the intellectual history of the world.

Our main object, however, is now to see what was the influence which Bacon exerted upon the

<sup>1</sup> See this point admirably discussed in Mill's “Logic,” vol. ii. p. 524, *et seq.*

progress of *speculative philosophy*. And it might be asked, first of all, did Bacon *intend* his method to be applicable to the moral as well as the physical sciences? This question, there can be little doubt, must be answered in the affirmative: for not only does he include logic, ethics, politics, and metaphysics in his work "*De Augmentis Scientiarum*," as branches open to the renewed investigation of the human mind; but he has some direct passages which touch upon the very point in question. It is only necessary to quote the following, which we translate from the first book of the "*Novum Organum*." "Perhaps any one," he says, "might doubt, rather than object, whether we intend to perfect by our method, not only natural philosophy, but also the other sciences, such as Logic, Ethics, and Politics. *We reply, that we understand the things we have spoken to be applicable to them all*; and just as the common logic, which governs things by the syllogism, not only pertains to the natural but to all the sciences, so also ours, which proceeds by induction, embraces them all likewise. For we may construct a history and tables of discovery concerning anger, fear, shame, and the like, just as we do concerning the scenes of civil life; nor less concerning the mental operations of memory, composition, division, judgment, and the rest, than about cold, or heat, or light, or vegetation, and the like."

Here, then, is sufficient evidence that Bacon did not *intend* to exclude these subjects from the sweep of his method. At the same time, it is no less evi-

dent that he applied his principles to psychological investigations with great reserve, and even timidity. For, immediately after the passage just quoted, he says,—“Our mode of discovery, by means of a prepared and arranged history, does not aim *so much* at the movements and operations of mind, like the common logic, but rather at *the nature of things*; we so train the mind that it may apply itself by apt methods to the nature of things.” There are other passages, moreover, in which Bacon seems absolutely to have distrusted his own method when applied to mental philosophy. “I hold,” he remarks, in his “Advancement of Learning,” “that this knowledge must, in the end, be bounded by religion, else it will be subject to deceit and delusion.” And again, still more explicitly, he remarks,—“*Mens humana si agat in materiam, naturam rerum, et opera Dei contemplando, pro modo naturæ operatur, atque ab eâ determinatur; si ipsa in se vertitur, tanquam aranea texens telam, tum demum indeterminata est, et parit telas quasdam doctrinæ, tenuitate fili, operisque mirabiles, sed quoad usum frivolas et inanes.*” Had he sought to break through the thin webs of the scholastic philosophy in this, as he did in so many other points, he might have proved here also, not like the spider, but like the silkworm, that weaves from within a web of excellent utility and marvellous beauty.

To estimate, however, the influence of Bacon upon the progress of speculative philosophy, we must not only consider the adaptation of his method

to elucidate and extend it, but gather up some of his own direct remarks upon metaphysical questions. The third book of the treatise "*De Augmentis Scientiarum*," gives us ample data on which to ground our opinion of Bacon's views respecting these more abstract subjects. It appears from this portion of his plan, that Bacon by no means wished to confine his philosophy to *mere phenomena*, but affirmed that it should be our constant endeavour to grasp the very *forms* of things; *i. e.* that we should attempt to comprehend the mode of their existence, and the laws of their secret operation. He compares knowledge to a pyramid, the base of which consists of particular facts, the vertex of which is the link between the creation and the Creator, while the stage immediately below the vertex, is that branch of science which comes distinctly within the idea of metaphysics. Let those who claim Bacon as the apostle of *positivism*, give us an interpretation of this whole division of his system, in consistency with their principles;—for our part, we look upon Bacon as having been much too far-sighted to describe so narrow a circle, as our modern naturalists do, within which to confine the excursions of the human reason. At the same time it must be confessed, that a very *inconsiderable* amount of his attention was given to these higher questions, that the doctrine of final causes was depreciated, and that the whole framework of his Organum was far more adapted to the investigations of physical than of metaphysical science. The great want of

the age in which he lived was unquestionably a *knowledge of facts*, and, therefore, it was to this point that he directed his chief attention. When, however, we read what he *has* written respecting metaphysical investigations, we may easily suppose, that had he lived to complete the great scheme of his *Instauratio Magna*, this ideal portion of his philosophy would have been far more fully developed.

Regarding, then, the Baconian philosophy *as it now stands*, we may sum up in few words the influence it was calculated to exert. First, the authority of the master himself led to the very sparing application of his method to psychological investigations, without, however, excluding them altogether. But, secondly, the recommendation to search into the *forms* of things, kept alive the belief in the importance of metaphysical analysis; although, at the same time, it was thrown into the background, by the vastly preponderating stress which was laid upon purely experimental processes. Whilst, therefore, all the branches of human knowledge were benefited by the eminently wise and practical spirit that pervaded his writings, yet their final result was to elevate natural philosophy above every other department; to place the empirical element in a too prominent position, and thus to give a clear ultimate tendency in favour of sensationalism.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is very interesting, and somewhat curious, to read the different comments which many men of the first ability have made upon Bacon's writings. In the third volume of the *Edinburgh Review*, there



The field, then, was now fairly open. The human reason had, in the person of Bacon, asserted for the department of science its independence of all former authority; the search after the foundations of truth was commenced by a master mind; but with this the tendency was already manifest to fall back upon the experience of our senses as the ultimate basis of the whole. It was not the intention of Bacon, indeed, as we have seen, to exclude all metaphysical conceptions, nor would he have sanctioned the consequences which were soon drawn from his decided leaning to the objective; but the influence which his writings were capable of pro-

is a somewhat remarkable discussion carried on between Dugald Stewart and the then Editor, as to the applicability of Bacon's method to the moral sciences. Stewart's defence of Bacon, in this respect, may be seen also in the Preliminary Dissertation to his "Philosophical Essays," chap. ii. p. 40, *et seq.*

Professor Playfair, in his Preliminary Dissertation, (Encyc. Met. Appendix,) considers that Bacon ran too far into the region of metaphysics. Dr Whewell (Phil. of Induc.) shows, that while Bacon took hold upon both the handles of science, the Empirical and the Ideal, yet he worked with the former far more energetically than with the latter. Mr Macaulay, in the Edinburgh Review, No. 132, pays a splendid tribute to Bacon's genius, but casts great doubts upon the *originality* of his method. Mr Hallam defends both the originality and utility of the method, but thinks that he fell into indistinctness from attempting more than he could ever accomplish.—("Lit. of Europe," vol. ii. page 426.) Mr Mill, in his "System of Logic," pays homage to Bacon as the father of *Induction*, but shows that he erred from want of seeing the real nature and uses of *Deduction*.

The conclusion from the whole seems to be, that the inductive system itself was involved in the spirit of the age; and that Bacon's merit was, to bring it out prominently to view, and encircle it by the profundity of his practical wisdom, and the impressive, the almost prophetic authority, of his philosophic style.

ducing upon the progress of *mental and moral philosophy*, was soon rendered apparent in the works of one of his warmest friends and followers. Hobbes, who had drunk deeply into the spirit of his master, began to philosophise just where *he* had left off. The master himself, looking far into the distance, occupied his whole genius in framing the *method* of future research. Many, indeed, were soon found to carry out this method in the department of physics to the most splendid results; but Hobbes was the only pupil who began by applying it in its most empirical character to metaphysics, morals, and politics.

The main features of the philosophy of Hobbes may be sketched out in a very few words. Bacon had attached so high an importance to experience, that it was regarded as the main, if not the only source of our real knowledge. Hobbes proceeded to develop this Baconian principle in such a manner, that he made *sensation* the real basis of every mental operation, the sole originator of our ideas, the sole medium and test of truth.<sup>1</sup> As, therefore, we can perceive through sensation only what is *material*, he concluded that matter is the only reality, and that whatever exists *to us* must accordingly be a part of the material universe. The whole process of scientific investigation was thus reduced to the *doctrine of bodies*, beyond which, he maintained, there can be no knowledge whatever, accessible to

<sup>1</sup> See "Leviathan," chap. i.

the human mind. This knowledge, however, does not refer simply to the *existence* of bodies, but also to their *changes*, of all which changes the ultimate principle is *motion*. The doctrine of bodies, therefore, includes the knowledge of all phenomena in relation to their probable causes; and of all possible causes as known from their observed effects. In other words, the facts being given by the senses, we have to discover by our reason all the consequences which will flow from them under every variety of circumstance. Such, according to Hobbes, is the proper province and the sole aim of true philosophy.

But now comes the chief peculiarity of his system. Bodies, he says, are divided into two kinds, *natural* bodies and *political* bodies. The former comprehend not only the whole of what we term external nature, but likewise those other existences which we variously call mind, soul, or spirit. This first division of philosophy, therefore, is so explained as to include the physical and mathematical sciences, Psychology and Logic, beside a number of subordinate branches.<sup>1</sup>

In *Physics*, Hobbes followed his illustrious predecessor, inculcating generally the necessity of observation, and manifesting with it a strong preference for the atomistic doctrine, which he probably owed to his intimacy with Gassendi. On this sub-

<sup>1</sup> *Vid.* the 9th chap. of the "Leviathan," in which we have a synoptic view of all the objects of philosophical research, constructed on the principle that science is *the knowledge of consequences*.

ject, however, it is not our business now to trespass; and it is, happily, of less consequence to do so, because the path of experimental philosophy was not the one in which our author delighted to walk; so much was this the case, that he even ridiculed the Royal Society of London for confining their attention so much to minute experiments.

The *Psychology* of Hobbes (in which, according to his system, the whole of metaphysics is included) is highly remarkable, not indeed on account of its intrinsic value, but remarkable when viewed in connexion with the age at which it was propounded. The mind itself he viewed as wholly material, the phenomena of consciousness being the direct result of our organisation. The one great and fundamental fact of mind is sensation:<sup>1</sup> which is nothing more or less than the effect of material objects around us, exerted by means of pressure or impact upon that material organisation which we term *the mind*.

Sensation, however, gives rise to sundry other phenomena of consciousness, which deserve particular attention. The movement of the particles of matter (in which sensation consists) gradually ceases, leaving, indeed, an impression of the thing, but far less vivid than during the actual period of impact. This "decaying sense," according to Hobbes, is Imagination, (or conception;) but if we view it in connexion with the fact of its being the linger-

<sup>1</sup> We have here the fundamental principle of the school of Condillac.

ing image of something past, then it is *memory*. Memory and Imagination, therefore, are the same things, only viewed from a different stand-point.<sup>1</sup> This leads to some further remarks in which he develops the doctrine of the association of Ideas.<sup>2</sup>

The next great phenomenon, upon which Hobbes lays amazing stress, is that of *Language*. So high an importance does he attach to *words*, that but for them he does not conceive that men could ever have lived in society : nay, reasoning itself is made so dependent upon terms, that he affirms the simplest mathematical truth to have been absolutely undiscoverable without them.<sup>3</sup> This leads at once to Hobbes' theory of knowledge. Knowledge, he says, is of two kinds. First, we gain direct impressions of external things by sensation, and this is "knowledge original ;" then we use words to denote things, and form them into propositions. When these propositions are correct, then we have another kind of knowledge, one which, though arising primarily from the senses, is mediated by the understanding. Understanding is the faculty which perceives the relation between words and things ;— and *truth* and *falsehood*, therefore, are nothing more than the agreement or disagreement of words among themselves, being terms applicable only to verbal propositions.<sup>4</sup>

To Logic, Hobbes devoted a considerable share

<sup>1</sup> *Vid.* Lev. chap. ii.

<sup>2</sup> Lev. chap. iv.

<sup>3</sup> Lev. chap. iii.

<sup>4</sup> Lev. chap. iv.

of attention. The peculiarity of his logical system lies in the theory, that reasoning is merely a numerical calculation. As the *dictum* upon which the syllogism depends turns simply upon the relation of a whole to its parts, Hobbes considered, that adding and subtracting expressed the whole process of ratiocination, *words* being the ciphers employed for the purpose. Error in reasoning, he showed to arise only from the want of definitions and the wrong employment of names: here, therefore, as in every other part of his system, the extreme results of nominalism are unhesitatingly appropriated.<sup>1</sup>

The Ethics of Hobbes are exactly what we should expect to flow from his sensational principles in metaphysics. If every thought is nothing more than a compound of sensations, then good and evil can be nothing more than expressions for pleasure and pain, that is, for agreeable or disagreeable sensations. There is nothing on this theory simply and absolutely good—nothing simply or absolutely evil; they are both relative to my own individual constitution; and all practical ethics, therefore, must consist in rules for the avoidance of the one, and the attainment of the other.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, as it does not depend upon ourselves to determine what feelings shall be pleasurable and what painful, it follows that our desires and volitions (which are the same thing, and both forms of sensation) must be irresistibly

<sup>1</sup> Mr Hallam defends this theory of Hobbes from the attack of Stewart.—“Lit. of Europe,” ii. p. 474.

<sup>2</sup> “Leviathan,” chap. vi.

determined by motives from without, and that man must, therefore, be absolutely and unconditionally the creature of necessity.

This leads us to the fundamental principle of Hobbes' political theory. As good and evil are identical with pleasure and pain, and as all men necessarily desire the one and shun the other, so nature herself dictates the right to every man of doing whatever he may think conducive to these ends, and in this manner of securing for himself all the means of physical enjoyment he is able, at whatever expense to his fellow man. The natural state of man, therefore, must necessarily be a state of warfare, in which all are struggling to advance their own selfish interests, every man's hand being against his brother, and his brother's against him. In brief, *might* and *right* are convertible terms. Experience, however, teaches that a state of universal warfare is a state of universal suffering, and reason accordingly dictates that we should seek for peace as the more conducive to human happiness. Hence the origin of law, government, and other social institutions which are simply intended to be antagonists to man's natural selfishness. The very aim and purport of government being simply to control the will of the individual, and erect a leviathan power to which man's selfishness must bow, the end of it is answered just in proportion as the power thus established is mighty to coerce or restrain. Hence an absolute monarchy is the very perfection of human government, and ought to have the supreme

decision over every thing connected with Law, Morals, and Religion.<sup>1</sup>

On the subject of Religion, Hobbes laid himself open to much obloquy, more especially as he attacked the clergy themselves, as well as their principles, in the most caustic and severe remarks. He admitted that the natural desire we possess of investigating *causes*, leads us to attribute some vast and incomprehensible cause to the universe around us. As, however, we can conceive of nothing which does not present itself to us as a sensuous image, it followed by necessity that we can have no real conception of a supreme Being; that infinity, in every form, is a mere negation.

We cannot avoid quoting the striking words with which Mr Hallam sums up his view of Hobbism generally:—"The political system of Hobbes, like his moral system, of which, in fact, it is only a portion, sears up the heart. It takes away the sense of wrong that has consoled the wise and good in their dangers, the proud appeal of innocence under oppression, like that of Prometheus to the elements, uttered to the witnessing world, to coming ages, to the just ears of Heaven. It confounds the principles of moral approbation, the notions of good and ill desert, in a servile idolatry of the monstrous leviathan it creates, and, after sacrificing all right at

<sup>1</sup> These political principles were first propounded in the Treatises "De Cive" and "De Corpore Politico." They are reproduced, however, connectedly, in the "Leviathan."



the altar of power, denies to the Omnipotent the prerogative of dictating the laws of his own worship.”<sup>1</sup>

Such, briefly, was the superstructure, metaphysical, moral, and political, which Hobbes built up with great ingenuity and ability upon the Baconian principles. Far would Bacon have been from following his pupil in these conclusions; but it can hardly be disputed that the germ of them was to be found in that empirical tendency, which runs more or less through the whole of his philosophy.

The genius which Hobbes manifested both in his style of writing, and in the severe logic by which he built up his whole system, from its ground-principles to its completion, no one has ever denied. Whilst, however, great ability was displayed in ALL his writings, the chief strength of his mind, especially in the latter period of his life, was evidently concentrated in his moral and political works, which, as they gained most celebrity, raised also the greatest opposition. The metaphysics of Hobbes, indeed, can by no means be considered brilliant efforts of genius, nor can they possibly serve as a basis upon which any deeply thinking mind would rest in its search after the fundamental principles of human nature. Yet Hobbes was undoubtedly, of all the adherents of the Baconian school, the greatest writer of his age; for the works of Gassendi, which now became extremely popular on the Continent of

<sup>1</sup> A full and beautiful edition of Hobbes' *Works* has been published by Sir W. Molesworth. London, 1839.

Europe, can hardly be regarded as equal to them in philosophical acumen, and there are no others able to dispute the field. In fact, the *metaphysician* of the Baconian philosophy was yet to appear, before the analytic method could be said to be strictly and successfully applied to the science of the human mind.

It was just at this time, while there was a perpetual conflict of opinions going on between the school of Hobbes on the one side, and those who, like Cumberland, were seeking to lay an immovable foundation for morality and religion on the other, that a company of scholars within the University of Oxford were assembled by chance at the chambers of *John Locke*. Finding themselves perplexed and baffled in their discussions, it occurred to Locke that they were taking the wrong road to arrive at truth; that the first thing to be done was not to analyse things themselves, or doctrines themselves, to their simplest and most abstract forms, but to investigate the faculties of the human mind, in order to see what objects lie within its reach, and what beyond it. From that day is dated the commencement of a work which was destined to exert a greater influence upon metaphysical science than any which had appeared since the age of Aristotle and Plato—I mean the “*Essay on the Human Understanding*.” We must proceed, therefore, to investigate succinctly, but as clearly as possible, the real tendency of this immortal work, and to estimate the effect it produced upon the progress of speculative philosophy.

SECTION II.—*Criticism of Locke.*

First of all, it is abundantly evident, that Locke is to be placed amongst those independent thinkers, who, instead of grounding their opinions upon any previous authority, determine rather to seek anew for themselves a solid foundation for human knowledge. In so doing he was evidently following, and that boldly, in the track which had been previously opened by the writings of Bacon. When the spirit of independent thinking is once acquired, there are, of course, many different directions which it may follow, and according to the path first struck out, will ever be the method and character of the whole subsequent investigation.

As to the *plan* which Locke proposed to follow, we are not left in doubt for a single moment; it is clear and decisive from the first page, and indeed is made manifest in the very circumstances which gave rise to his "Essay." He affirms in the very outset, that it is of no use to search deeply into any subject, with the hope of attaining ultimate truth, before we have estimated aright the *instrument* we have to employ; that is, to use his own words, "before we have found out the powers of the understanding, the extent to which they reach, and the points in which they fail."<sup>1</sup> It is impossible to indicate more clearly than this his fixed opinion, that the foundation of all philosophy must be

<sup>1</sup> Essay, chap. i. sec. 4.

found in *Psychology*, and that the starting-point must ever be an accurate observation and analysis of the facts or phenomena of our own consciousness. Here we see at once that Locke had imbibed not only Bacon's independence, but also *the spirit* of the Baconian method; that he both avoided and despised (as he tells us in almost the first paragraph<sup>1</sup>) the fruitless speculations of former philosophers to ascertain such things as "the essence of the mind," or "by what motions of our spirits, or changes in our bodies, we experience sensations," or to solve any similar question, the evidence of which does not come directly within the range of our own consciousness; but that, on the contrary, he considered the study of mind as well as of matter to have reference simply to such actual phenomena as can be observed, classified, and correctly reasoned upon.

But then arises the inquiry, Can we observe the phenomena of mind as surely as we do those of the material world, and can we equally regard them as real objects of science? That we can make observations upon the facts of our inward life must be evident to every reflecting mind; for what do we mean when we speak of consciousness, except that there is something or other passing within us of which we are conscious? Everything, therefore, that passes through the mind, of whatever nature it be, may be regarded as a legitimate object of mental

<sup>1</sup> Essay, chap. i. sec. 2.

philosophy ; it is *a phenomenon*, and as such can be set down upon our roll as a real and unquestionable fact, equally valid with those of any other science.

Locke takes it for granted, accordingly, as a thing resting on the direct evidence of our consciousness, that man *has* an understanding, that if his consciousness assures him of anything, it assures him that he does think, and, if he think, that there must be something within, which is the immediate object of his thoughts. Such object, whatever it be, he terms an *idea*, the proper definition of which accordingly he considers to be, "Anything with which our minds are immediately occupied when we think."<sup>1</sup> Thus the whole science of the human understanding, or, as it may be otherwise expressed, the whole search after the true principles of human knowledge, is reduced simply to the *study of ideas*.

This study he proposes to prosecute in a three-fold manner. He proposes, first, to investigate the *origin* of our ideas, and the means by which we acquire them ; that being done, he offers, secondly, to show what knowledge we possess by means of our ideas, and to determine its certainty, evidence, and extent ; and then, as there are objects in the mind which we cannot call objects of knowledge, but the reality of which rests solely upon opinion or faith, he proposes, thirdly, to examine the grounds and the degrees of our assent in matters of this nature.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Essay, chap. i. sec. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. chap. i. sec. 3.

Now, what does this sketch (which Locke gives us in his introduction) of the course he intended to follow in the work at large indicate? It shows us most clearly his full conviction, that the *phenomena* of the mind itself must be our first study; and that the ideas we may be found to possess within our consciousness must be thoroughly probed and traced to their very origin, before we raise any inquiry as to their certainty, their validity, or their accurate correspondence with any external object to which we may suppose them to answer. In a word, it exhibits the great principle, that both logic and ontology are out of place, until we have laid a foundation for them in *psychology*. When we have once learned to appreciate the true nature of our faculties, and have observed and classified all the inward phenomena of our consciousness, then, first, we may begin to mark out, in order, the abstract forms which our thoughts and reasonings assume—that is, to create a science of formal logic; and then, first, also, may we begin to inquire how far these subjective ideas are the signs and proofs of objective existences,—that is, how far we can lay securely the ground-principles of ontology. So far Locke was true to his proposed method, so far he applied admirably the Baconian system to the study of the human mind, and bid fair to build up a superstructure of metaphysical philosophy upon a fixed and immoveable basis.\*

\* See Cousin's "Cours de l'Histoire de la Phil." Leçon 16, in which Locke's Methodology is very fully discussed.

In order, then, to point out where, and in what manner, Locke departed from the principles which he at first laid down for his guidance, let us for a moment consider what the *new organum* of philosophy, as derived from Bacon and employed by Locke himself, really is. It contains, as we have shown, two movements; first, the observation of phenomena just as nature gives them; and then the explication and recomposition of them, in such a manner as to bring to view *general laws*. Now fidelity to these principles imperatively demanded of Locke, when he applied them to the subject of his Essay, to commence by a thorough investigation of *all* the phenomena of the human understanding, as they are given to us in our own consciousness; having done this, he might safely have proceeded, either to classify them, or to draw any conclusions that seemed warranted. But what plan does he actually pursue? Instead of commencing by such a careful induction of facts, he makes in the outset no induction at all; he seeks to determine neither the number nor the characteristics of our ideas, but starts at once by searching for their *origin*. This was the point in which he first of all departed from the true method of philosophising, and which led him on many occasions, as we shall soon see, into no little inaccuracy and confusion.<sup>1</sup>

There is not, in fact, a single branch of inductive science in the world, which would give correct results, if pursued in the same manner as Locke

<sup>1</sup> See Cousin's "Histoire de la Phil." p. 253. Brussels edition, 1840.

human mind, whose existence and nature has now been defined, is the subject of many ideas. It is required, therefore, to determine two things—first, what is the nature of Ideas generally, and secondly, what is the criterion of their veracity. As to the nature of ideas, Descartes defines them to be “all that is in our mind when we conceive a thing, in whatever way we conceive it.” He employs the term evidently not in the sense of an image or resemblance, but in the more general sense of any thought, notion, or perception, which the mind either possesses or creates.<sup>1</sup>

The chief point, however, in the doctrine of ideas is to determine their validity—to point out some criterion by which the true can be distinguished from the false. The Cartesian criterion is that of clearness and distinctness. A distinct idea he maintains is necessarily a true one, while an indistinct idea has no guarantee about it of objective validity. This rule, in fact, like the primitive affirmation of the existence of *the me*, is nothing more than an appeal to the truth of consciousness. Whatever consciousness holds out to me as clearly and distinctly *true*, that I am bound to accept; upon such a faith in the veracity of our faculties must the very first elements of all our knowledge repose.<sup>2</sup>

But now when we begin to interrogate our con-

<sup>1</sup> For Descartes' classification of ideas into forms of Thought, Passion, and Will, consult the “*Traité des Passions*,” first Part. He elsewhere divides them into *adventitious*, *fictitious*, and *innate*.

<sup>2</sup> Meditation IV.



sciousness, we find that there is *one*, out of the whole number of our conceptions, which stands forth both by its clearness and its uniqueness far above all the rest, that, namely, of an infinite and all-perfect Being. If, then, clear ideas are always objectively true, and the idea of a God is the clearest of all, we must have a direct proof from consciousness itself of the divine existence. Here, then, we perceive the nature and validity of Descartes' famous psychological argument for the foundation principle of natural theology, which may be stated as follows. The idea of an all-perfect, infinite Being is without controversy in my mind. How could it have come there? Not from the outer world, not from education, not from *any* finite source—for the finite and imperfect could never give me the conception of the perfect and the Infinite, the effect never transcend the cause. Hence if I have incontestably the clear idea of God, a God must necessarily exist.<sup>1</sup>

The reality of the divine existence, as of an all-perfect Being, having been thus established, Descartes now uses it as a *fixed truth*, by which to establish the veracity of other and previously doubtful facts. When we begin to reason about things within or around us, we find ourselves able to arrive

<sup>1</sup> Descartes has also given an ontological proof for the Being of a God, namely, that the *existence* of God is implied in the very nature or essence of the idea we have of Him, as the existence of a triangle in the conception of a triangle. For these two proofs, see Meditations three and five. Every *a priori* argument is virtually reducible to the psychological or the ontological process as here indicated.

by rigid deduction at certain conclusions. In this way, for example, we come to the fixed truths of geometry and natural philosophy, truths which have not the evidence of direct consciousness, but only that of clear demonstration. What, then, is our evidence of the validity of this knowledge? not the criterion before laid down, for here it is inapplicable: the evidence must be that of the Divine veracity. Geometry is true, because God will not allow our faculties to deceive us respecting the actual relations of space objectively considered; and so with regard to all other deductive knowledge.

The most remarkable application of this principle is that which relates to our knowledge of the external world. In the threefold classification of our ideas, Descartes shows that there is one class which includes what we term *perceptions*, and which, we are conscious, must have some cause distinct from our own will. What, then, is the cause from which they take their rise? Appeal to the senses and they give us no reply, since all we know from them are subjective phenomena. From these, then, let us appeal to our reason; and it, in reply, points us to the Being of all perfection, upon whose veracity we may fully depend, and who, we know, could not have formed our senses and constituted our minds in such a manner, as to render our life one perpetual scene of deception. Hence the external world is a reality, but a reality which rests solely upon the prior evidence we have of the existence

and perfections of God.<sup>1</sup> This argument, we may remark, implies a decided paralogism that renders it one of the weakest points in the Cartesian metaphysics. The veracity of our faculties is first appealed to, in order to establish the being of a God, and then the authority of God is appealed to, in order to establish the veracity of our faculties. The whole question is thus enclosed in a vicious circle.

The portion, perhaps, of the Cartesian doctrines, most productive of ulterior consequences, was that which refers to the relation subsisting between God and the creation. Creation itself, Descartes attributed to *the will* of the Almighty, making even necessary truth itself dependent upon that will, rather than upon the nature of things. In this doctrine, the stability of absolute truth unquestionably appears to have been somewhat compromised ; for if it be true, there is no reason why the relations of space and number, as involved in mathematical science, should not alter to-morrow, if there were a purpose for it in the mind of God. More important still, however, was his doctrine respecting the act of creation itself. To Descartes the whole dependent world, both of mind and matter, is a vast mechanism carried on by external laws ; a mechanism which requires the act of creation to be ever reproduced, in order to keep it in perpetual and harmonious operation.

<sup>1</sup> Respecting the question of the external world, we have Descartes' views in his sixth Meditation, where he shows generally the superior certainty and clearness of our *innate* or fundamental ideas over all other.

According to this view there can be no direct action of matter upon matter, because it is the perpetual efflux of the “vis creatrix” by which all such action is maintained; and, consequently, secondary causes can be nothing more than modifications of the first cause. In like manner, also, there can be no direct influence mutually exerted upon each other by mind and matter, for the action of both is dependent upon the continuity of the creative power, as seen in the laws or mechanism of body and soul. In this one affirmation, *that the universe depends upon the productive power of God not only for its first existence, but equally so for its continued being and operation*, there is involved the germ of the several doctrines of pre-established harmony—of occasional causes—of our seeing all things in God—and, finally, of pantheism itself, the ultimate point to which they all tend. We have, it is true, in the Cartesian philosophy, all three of the primary conceptions to which we have reduced the whole mass of our intellectual phenomena. We have first the notion of self, then that of God, and lastly, by implication, that of the world. By viewing mind, however, more in the efforts of its reason than of its will, and by assigning to it innate ideas, rather than innate and active faculties, he much weakened the notion of human liberty,<sup>1</sup> and through that of personality also. By

<sup>1</sup> Descartes' doctrine of Free Will was much disputed by the theologians of the succeeding age; perhaps it is difficult to define it very accurately, but it certainly wavered between the liberty of indifference and the necessity of Calvinism.

assigning, again, our sense-perceptions to divine interposition, he removed the notion of matter to a vast distance, and hewed away the chief foundations on which its reality rests; while amidst all this, the notion of the infinite and all-perfect Being, as immanent in His creation, attained a predominance great and all-absorbing, in proportion as the others were weakened and diminished.

To sum up, therefore, our estimate of Descartes' influence upon philosophy, we should say, that, while he taught the true principle of mental analysis, and deduced from it many splendid results, yet that his writings, upon the whole, tended to elevate the idea of the infinite and absolute above all others, and thus prepared the way, as we shall soon find, for a complete system of *objective idealism*.

Into the physics, the physiology, and some other branches of the Cartesian philosophy, we forbear to enter, as they are of little or no worth except to warn us, how easily the acutest minds, though starting from correct principles, may lose the road, and how soon, when blinded by a false argument, they may take the step from a rigid system of demonstration to one of improbability, utterly unsustained by evidence. Between the first and the last words which Descartes uttered in the department of philosophy, there is a distinction almost as wide asunder as the poles. His starting principle—that all philosophy begins in an analysis of the human consciousness—is the foundation of all subsequent psychological investigations down to the present day.

His system, when completed, gives us, on the other hand, the infallible germ of a pure idealism.<sup>1</sup>

Amongst the followers of Descartes, we must distinguish those who embraced his philosophy *as a whole*, and evolved still further the results contained in it, from those who simply followed his *method*, and produced from it a philosophy of their own. To the former belong only his immediate successors, to the latter belong all the philosophers of the rationalistic school, who flourished during the latter part of the seventeenth and the whole of the eighteenth centuries. It is, then, with Cartesianism *as a whole*, not simply as a method, that we have now to do ; and the progress of this may be summed up by a brief reference to three men, of uncommon philosophical genius, in whose writings its extreme results have been developed.<sup>2</sup> The first

<sup>1</sup> The study of Descartes has revived in recent times among the French philosophers to an extraordinary degree. In 1824, M. Cousin published his whole works in 11 volumes. In 1832, M. Gruyer published his "Essais Philosophiques suivis de la Métaphysique de Descartes assemblée et mise en ordre." In 1842, appeared M. Bouillier's "Histoire et Critique de la Révolution Cartésienne." M. Jules Simon published his small edition with an admirable introduction in 1844 ; and in 1846, appeared M. Damiron's "Essai sur l'Histoire de la Philosophie en France au xvii<sup>me</sup> siècle," containing, in addition to his own views, a report upon six memoirs given in to the Académie des Sciences upon the Philosophy of Descartes and its effects. Other works have appeared, but the above are the most important.

<sup>2</sup> The number of Descartes' followers who wrote in illustration or defence of his philosophy was very considerable. The most celebrated of these was Pierre Sylvain Regis, who wrote an elaborate "Système de la Philosophie," published at Paris in 1690. These professed Cartesians do not of course tend to illustrate the *progress* of the idealistic philosophy ; they merely explain its state under the more immediate authority of Descartes.

of these was Arnold Geulincx, a native of Antwerp, who, in common with many more of the *littérati* of France and Holland, entered enthusiastically into the Cartesian principles on their first publication to the world. It was Geulincx, in fact, who first brought out, in its proper form, the celebrated doctrine of *occasional causes*, according to which God himself is the direct agent in all the related movements of the soul and the body, while the affections of the latter afford the *occasion* upon which he produces the corresponding sensations in the former. This was clearly an additional step taken towards the formation of a system of objective idealism.<sup>1</sup>

The next in the order of time of the three philosophers I have referred to was Spinoza, but in the order of development we should rather assign the second place to Malebranche. They both, in fact, wrote very nearly at the same period, and to a great extent, if not entirely, independently of one another; so that there is no real error committed whichever we place first upon the list, while both are separate proofs of the actual tendency of the Cartesian principles. Malebranche, as a thinker, as

<sup>1</sup> The origination of the doctrine of occasional causes is disputed. Some attribute it to De la Forge, author of a "*Traité de l'Esprit Humain*," published in 1666. Tennemann attributes it to Geulincx. That the latter made the greater innovations upon the original Cartesian doctrines, there can be no doubt; and even if there are some remarks which favour the theory in question in the works of De la Forge, the clear elucidation of it seems rather due to Geulincx. On the opinions of both, see Damiron's "*Essai sur xvii<sup>me</sup> siècle*," vol. ii. book 4.

a writer, and as an earnest lover both of truth and goodness, merits to stand almost at the head of the early *literati* of his country. His thoughts are always lofty, his observations acute, his style luminous and attractive, and his spirit truthful and sincere.<sup>1</sup> It would be difficult to find in any language a more able prophylactic against error than is contained in his great work "*De la Recherche de la Vérité*," or more acute remarks on the various methods by which deceptions gain an influence over the mind. Our present object, however, is to view Malebranche simply in his relation to the Cartesian philosophy.

The notion of the absolute, as we have seen, had been brought by Descartes so prominently into his later philosophy, that the idea of finite mind as a self-acting and causative principle was much weakened, and its perception of the material world made to depend in every case upon the interposition of Divine power. Now, the whole of what is peculiar to Malebranche as an idealist, arose from the more intense view which he took of this feature in the Cartesian philosophy, from the still greater predominance which was thus given to the power of the great first cause, and the tendency consequently engendered of absorbing *in it*, the influence of all secondary causes throughout the universe.

The two kinds of existence that are known in

<sup>1</sup> Leibnitz says, "Le Père Malebranche joint à des profondes méditations, une belle manière de les exprimer."



the world, according to Malebranche, are body and spirit, of which the former possesses the qualities of extension and mobility, the latter the corresponding attributes of understanding and will; but as both are equally finite and dependent, and have no original source of action within themselves, no changes can take place in material things, no secondary causes exist, no effect be produced by matter upon mind, no part of the vast machinery of creation go forward, without the immediate will and power of the great first cause. Hence follows, by very easy steps, the whole of Malebranche's well-known metaphysical theory; for, since on this principle there is no action of external things upon the mind, nor any reaction of mind upon them, without the direct interposition of the Deity; and since the *ideas* of all things must exist in the mind of the Creator (as Plato had so abundantly demonstrated), the most natural conclusion was, that the human mind sees everything in the Divine, and that God himself is our intelligible world. We have no further occasion, therefore, to attempt the solution of the knotty point upon which so many philosophers had toiled, namely, the method by which matter and spirit mutually affect each other, it being entirely solved on this one simple principle, that it is in God that our minds live and move and have their being. What, then, it might be rejoined to this, (if we only see the archetypes of things in God,) is the use of the material world at all, and why should we assume its existence? To

this Malebranche replies by appealing to revelation, which assures us that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth; so that the very existence of matter was made by him to depend upon the interpretation of a passage of Scripture, which interpretation only needed to be invalidated, in order to plunge us at once into complete idealism. The whole effect of Malebranche's philosophy, accordingly, was to merge all secondary causes into the one infinite cause; to diminish, proportionally, the notion of human liberty, and to suspend the whole material world upon one slender thread, which it merely required a little exegetical ingenuity to snap for ever asunder.<sup>1</sup>

It is to Spinoza, however, that we must attribute the honour (if, indeed, it is to be esteemed such) of

<sup>1</sup> It is needless to remark that we have only designed to give here that characteristic of Malebranche's philosophy, which bears upon the progress of idealism. To appreciate the Platonic sublimity, the philosophic depth, the practical wisdom, and the Christian purity of his mind, he must be read and studied. His principal work, "*De la Recherche de la Vérité*," is divided into six books. He first points out the errors and bewilderments which arise from implicitly trusting to the senses. In this he strongly evinces his idealism, by invalidating all the ordinary evidences for the existence of a material world. In the second book he discusses the errors of the imagination. This, however, is encumbered by a material theory, similar to that of Descartes himself. The third book on Pure Spirit is the most interesting of all. In this, his theory of seeing all things in God, is fully developed. The next two books treat of the various propensities and passions of human nature, viewed as sources of error and evil. The last book points out the method we ought to follow in the search after truth. His other works are "*Conversations Chrésiennes*," "*Méditations Chrésiennes*," "*Entretiens sur la Métaphysique*," "*Traité de la Nature et de la Grâce*," and "*Traité de Morale*."

drawing forth from the Cartesian principles their ultimate results.<sup>1</sup> Descartes and Malebranche both aimed at employing a strictly consecutive method in their philosophy, and both were led, more or less, into error, by attempting to ground upon demonstration what really can only rest upon the direct authority of our consciousness. Spinoza, animated with a still higher love of this same method, commenced his philosophical career by an attempted reduction of the Cartesian principles to the geometrical form; to which attempt he added some further ideas (termed by him "*Cogitata metaphysica*," ) that were intended to point out various other developments of the same philosophy. These, however, cannot be considered as belonging to the development of Spinozism, properly so called; they were merely lectures on the Cartesian philosophy reduced to the form most in accordance with the natural genius of the author, and accompanied by a few illustrative hints. The only other work he published *himself*, is entitled "*Tractatus Theologico-politicus*," the object of which was to clear up the difficult ground that lies between religion and politics. His principal works, containing in fact the whole of his philosophy, properly so called, were only published after his death, and it is from these that we shall attempt to draw as clear an

<sup>1</sup> Leibnitz called Spinoza's philosophy "*Extreme Cartesianism*." —N.B. The quotations on Spinoza are taken from the edition of M. Saisset (Paris, 1843), as by far the most convenient for the general reader to refer to.

account of his system, as our necessary brevity and its frequent obscurity will admit.

The real foundation of Spinoza's system is to be found in his posthumous fragment "De Intellectus Emendatione."<sup>1</sup> In this fragment we have a general investigation of the different methods by which knowledge is communicated to the human mind. First of all, we gain a number of ideas, either by mere hearsay, or by the vague experience of the senses.<sup>2</sup> This is termed in the Ethics, knowledge of the first kind. Next, we may gain ideas by direct inference from other ideas, that is, by the effort of the logical faculty or understanding. But, lastly, knowledge, properly so called, only arises when by an effort of the reason we grasp the very essence of things,

<sup>1</sup> A reviewer, to whom reference has already been made, denies the propriety of grounding Spinoza's system upon his *Psychology*, and describes it as turning the reasoning upside down. I rather doubt from his supposition (that I was referring here to the second book of the Ethics, "De Mente"), whether he was *himself* well acquainted with the fragment above quoted. To me it is perfectly clear, that Spinoza intended that work to be a *preparative* to his Ethics, that he saw with Descartes the necessity of grounding his dogmatism in a critique of the consciousness, (on which all first principles must repose,) and that his system really *begins* in his psychological survey. M. Saisset remarks on this point—"Génie essentiellement réfléchi, élevé à une école sévère celle de Descartes, Spinoza n'ignorait pas qu'il n'y a point en philosophie de problème, antérieur à celui de la méthode. La nature et la portée de l'entendement humain, l'ordre légitime de ses opérations, la loi fondamentale qui les doit régler, tous ces grands objets avaient occupé ses premières méditations, et il ne cessa de s'en inquiéter pendant toute sa vie. Nous savons *qu'avant d'écrire son éthique*, il avait jeté les bases d'un traité complet sur la méthode," (namely, in the work "De Intellectus Emendatione.")—Œuvres, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. II. p. 280.

when we gaze upon *being* itself.<sup>1</sup> Upon the validity of this intellectual intuition (a direct application of Descartes' appeal to the authority of consciousness), the very axioms of Spinoza's system must wholly rest.

From the vestibule of Spinozism we may now go into the temple. Let it be admitted that the reason of mankind, looking through the veil of passing phenomena, seeks after something fixed and abiding. That it must find some resting place, some ultimate unalterable idea, that supposes no other beyond it, is evident, otherwise the process of abstraction would go on to infinity (*regressus in infinitum*). Such an idea Descartes found in the notion of absolute perfection ; but then, rejoins Spinoza, what is perfection but the mere attribute of some perfect *Being*? The fundamental idea therefore can only be found in Being itself, *i. e.* in the notion of a *substance*, which is absolutely self-existent, and needs no other conception beside itself to render it complete and intelligible.<sup>2</sup>

But, then, how are we to comprehend substance in its real nature and essence? Manifestly by means of its attributes, for attribute is that which our reason conceives of as *constituting* its essence.<sup>3</sup>

The attributes under which we conceive of Substance are two, extension and thought, both of which must be infinite, as belonging to an infinite being ; not indeed infinite absolutely, but relatively

<sup>1</sup> Vol. ii. p. 281.

<sup>2</sup> Eth. Def. iii. book i.

<sup>3</sup> De Deo, Def. iv.

to the substratum in which they exist. But these two attributes appear in an endless variety of aspects, which we may term *modes*.<sup>1</sup> Modes, then, express the nature of attributes, and attributes the nature of substance, so that here we have all existence, absolute and relative, embraced in the three ideas of substance, attributes, modes. The absolute self-existent substance is God; everything else must be attributes and modes, under which that substance appears.

God then exists. The proof of his existence is identical with that of one infinite, eternal, self-existent substance. Moreover, it is demonstrable, that there can be but one substance in the universe; for one substance cannot be produced by another, according to its very definition, as being self-existent.<sup>2</sup> Hence, God is not only *one*, but there can be no real essential existence beside; he is *το πᾶν*, the great universal *all*.

The whole nature of God can now be determined. The fact of his self-existence involves the idea of *freedom*; for what can there be to oppose and limit his power? This freedom or essential activity, therefore, joined with the two attributes above mentioned, involve the following results—First, that God is free, yet free in a sense which excludes the idea of volition or will; free only as ever unfolding his own essential being, without obstruction or restraint.<sup>3</sup> Secondly, that God has infinite exten-

<sup>1</sup> De Deo, Def. v.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. Prop. vi.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. Prop. xvii.

sion, yet, so as not to imply anything *material*, but only pure abstract extension.<sup>1</sup> Thirdly, that God eternally thinks, but contemplates only *himself*, without ideas, without the flow of consciousness, without an understanding in the ordinary sense. His intelligence is one eternal, unchangeable gaze upon truth, *i. e.* upon himself.<sup>2</sup>

But now the question arises, how are we to explain the existence and nature of the phenomenal world? The relation of the infinite to the finite, is one of the most difficult problems which philosophy has ever undertaken to unravel. Some have had recourse to the dualistic hypothesis, which supposes an eternal existence of matter, co-ordinate with God. Others have imagined the phenomenal world to be the direct product of creative power, God bringing all things out of nothing. These theories we see at once are entirely inadmissible on the principles of Spinozism, already laid down. Here God is not a creating mind, but *Being itself*, the one unchangeable essence, which underlies everything else. Thought and extension both exist as perfections absolutely in God, but thought and extension would ever be but vain and empty abstractions, unless they were referred as attributes to *Being*. Hence, any particular thought, and any particular extension can be nothing but mere abstractions, unless *they* are referred to absolute thought and absolute extension, such as exist only

<sup>1</sup> De Deo, Part II. prop. ii.      <sup>2</sup> Ibid. Part II. prop. i.

in Deity himself.<sup>1</sup> Being, then, involves as attributes, infinite thought and infinite extension; these attributes involve an infinite number of finite determinations, and these determinations constitute the phenomenal world; those of the infinite thought giving rise to finite minds, those of the infinite extension to all material existences.<sup>2</sup>

God, then, may be viewed, according to Spinoza, in two different aspects, first, as the eternal substance, possessing in himself infinite attributes and modes of Being; and, secondly, as the self-existent *one*, developing himself, and expanding into an infinite number of finite determinations. The one is *natura naturans*, the other *natura naturata*; the one, the absolute, containing all things *potentially* within its infinite nature; the other, the absolute unfolding that nature into all the modifications of thought and extension of which the universe consists. Hence, God is, in a most pregnant sense, the cause of all things, inasmuch as all things are but modes of his own infinite attributes; or, in the words of the author, “*Deus est omnium rerum causa immanens, non transiens.*”<sup>3</sup>

That Spinoza affirmed the existence of a God, and affirmed it so earnestly, as to merit the appellation given him by Novalis, of “the god-intoxicated

<sup>1</sup> See M. Saisset's *Introd.* p. lxxx.

<sup>2</sup> *De Deo*, prop. xxv. and corollary.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* prop. xv. xvi. xviii. xxi. xxiii. Also in Part II. Def. i. matter is defined—“A mode which expresses in a certain determined manner the essence of God, inasmuch as we consider God as a thing extended.”



man," may be readily admitted in a certain sense ; but that he allowed the existence of a God in the ordinary and Christian acceptation of that word, is far from being the case. A Being to whom understanding, will, and even personality is denied ; a being who does not create but simply *is*, who does not act but simply unfolds, who does not purpose, but brings all things to pass by the necessary law of his own existence—such a being cannot be a father, a friend, a benefactor, in a word, cannot be a *God* to man, for man is but a part of himself. It may be more correct to term the philosophy of Spinoza, a pantheism than an atheism ; but if we take the common idea or definition of Deity as valid, then assuredly we must conclude that the God of Spinoza is no God, and that his pantheism is only a more imposing form of atheism.

There is throughout all Spinoza's reasoning, a vast ambiguity lying concealed in the word *substance*. Taking it as implying *Being per se*, he succeeds admirably in proving that it must be uncreated, eternal, divine ; but this is no *proof* of the impossibility of the act of creation. Why should the term *substance* be confined to this precise definition, why should it not include Being *per alium* as well as Being *per se* ? If this be admissible, the pantheistic basis crumbles beneath his feet, the old stand-point is regained, that God is the efficient *cause* of all things, not the *essence* of which all things consist.

Having discussed the nature of God, Spinoza

proceeds in the second part of his Ethics (*De Mente*), to expound his theory respecting man. The mind of man, as was before shown, must be essentially and substantially a portion of the divine thinking; regarded individually or phenomenally, it must be a *succession of different modes* of the infinite *thought*. But this is not all: the mind of man is closely united to the body, which is a mode of the divine *extension*. Man, therefore, consists in the perfect connexion or identity of these two modes of the divine nature; the mind is a mode of the divine thought, the body of the divine extension, and both are alike attributes of the same substance. Accordingly, mind and body are essentially *one*; they are two different, but corresponding representations of the one divine essence. The body is the *object* of the mind, the mind the *idea* of the body, and they are united to each other through life, not because there is any *direct* connexion between them, but because there is a fundamental unity.<sup>1</sup>

Having thus explained the nature of the soul generally, Spinoza proceeds to deduce logically, and connectedly, a whole theory of psychology.<sup>2</sup> Mind itself not being an *existence*, but only an *idea*, or succession of ideas, all mental phenomena must be

<sup>1</sup> Part II. prop. x. xi. xiii. It will be seen that this is the full development of the Cartesian doctrine of occasional causes, viewed in the light of a pantheistic philosophy.

<sup>2</sup> This does not exclude the use of those higher processes of psychology, by which the validity of his primary axioms is established. That the method of reflection is primarily necessary, he has affirmed in his "Tractatus," p. 162.

ideas likewise, that is, must be mind in its different states. The term *understanding* embraces all the phenomena included under the term knowledge. First of all, the mind, by virtue of its connexion with its own body, comprehends all the various affections of body in general; this is knowledge of the secondary kind, which is generally referred to sensation as the source, and which Spinoza terms *vague experience*.<sup>1</sup> Beside this sensible intuition, however, which is a mode of thought determined by other modes, and consequently vague and inadequate, there is also an intellectual intuition, by which we gaze at once upon the infinite attributes of Being itself. This knowledge is clear, distinct, and adequate.<sup>2</sup> Between these two extremes comes the region of deductive knowledge, which is clear and adequate as far as it goes, but does not grasp the first principles of truth, and consequently is incomplete.<sup>3</sup> From this theory of the understanding, Spinoza describes the sources of error, and determines the validity of knowledge, properly so called.

In the third part of the *Ethics*, we are introduced to the origin and nature of the passions. All existence is a chain, of which each part is dependent upon the rest. Every particular *mode* of the divine extension and thought exists apart from the infinite essence, by a balance of forces, which keep it distinctively in being. The human mind is simply a

<sup>1</sup> De Mente, prop. xvi and xxiv. to xxix.      <sup>2</sup> Ibid. prop. xl.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. schol. ii.

link in the chain of existence, and is retained in being distinct from the infinite essence, by the activity which operates from within upon the world around, and by the action of all other things upon it. *Man is a balance of powers, and the tension by which he subsists is termed passion.* If there is a perfect equilibrium between the mind and every thing else, passion is silent; it still exists, but exists only as a force, which is exactly counteracted by other forces bearing upon it. If the mind pass from a less state of action to a greater, overcoming the powers by which it is controlled, then we experience *joy*; if it pass from a greater state of action to a less, then we experience *grief*. From these two all the other passions are generated.

The fourth and fifth part of the Ethics refer to the slavery and freedom of the will, the former arising from the entire subjugation of the higher reason to the passions, the latter from putting the passions under control of the reason. It is clear, however, that in the proper sense of the word, freedom can have no place in the system of Spinoza, with reference either to man or to God. Everything wears the aspect of a vast mechanism, moving forward by the impulse of eternal fate. God is free from all outward constraint, but is a *necessary* Being as regards the laws of his eternal development. Man is *termed* free, as containing within him a certain amount of action; but he lives and acts from first to last, a link in the chain of fate, by the same inexorable necessity.

Hence, there is a twofold aspect in which Ethics may be viewed. Regarding man on the one hand in his phenomenal, or on the other hand in his absolute relations, we may estimate good and evil, vice and virtue, merit and demerit, either on the lower ground of mere phenomena, or on the higher ground of absolute reality. If we look at human life on the lower ground, if we regard all things simply as they seem to the senses and the imagination, then man *appears* to be a free agent; but it is an appearance perfectly false and delusive. We term things contingent, just because we are unable by the senses to rise upwards to the contemplation of the great law by which they are eternally fixed. We *seem* to have the notions of good and evil, but they are merely mutilated or inadequate conceptions, suited to the delusive belief of a free agency, which does not really exist. In this sphere of our knowledge, good is synonymous with what is agreeable, evil with what is injurious. Every man's desire must be the law of his practical life. He has no choice but to follow out his passions to whatsoever they may prompt him. Self-enjoyment and self-preservation are in fact the sole rule of his conduct. The difference between the good man and the bad is simply that the former has a greater sum of *action* and consequent enjoyment in him than the latter. Right is the only correlate of power, and can never be really violated except by a deficiency of might; so that the object of all government is the exercise of force, and all law is limitation. In this respect

the philosophy of Hobbes and Spinoza, *i. e.* the extremes of sensationalism and idealism, meet, and evolve the same conclusions.

These conclusions, so sweeping in their nature, and terrible in their moral results, were afterwards contravened by viewing man in his pure and absolute relations. Here reason comes into action, and gazing not upon phenomena, but upon reality, lifts us upwards into a spiritual life, where every thing appears under a new aspect. From this elevation we look down with pity and contempt upon those who are the slaves of the senses—the victims of passion. The perfect life we now see to be the life of pure reason; in which we rise to the contemplation of God, and by means of which the divine thought realises itself in us. Here all passion, all contention, all delusion, ceases. Raised to a perfect union with the Divine essence, we are filled with the knowledge and the love of God, in which knowledge and love we find at length the perfection, the bliss, and eternal repose of our being.<sup>1</sup>

Such are the general outlines of Spinoza's philosophy—a philosophy in which our whole individuality is absorbed in the Divine substance, in which human freedom gives place to the most absolute

<sup>1</sup> The sentiments we have briefly combined in the above two or three paragraphs, are developed in the last two parts of the *Ethics*. The whole of the reasoning is here so closely connected, that it is useless to refer to any particular propositions in connexion with so brief and popular a view as I have thought it best to give in the text. The reader who seeks further information, can procure M. Saisset's French edition, and will find an admirable guide to the study of the whole system in his introductory Essay.

fatalism, and in which God, deprived of all personality, becomes synonymous with the universe, embracing in himself alone its endless phenomena.

The foundation of all these results is to be found in the full expansion of the error, in which, as we have seen, both Descartes and Malebranche were involved. Both these philosophers admitted the three fundamental notions of the human reason—the finite self, finite nature, and the absolute; but they manifested a constantly increasing tendency to make the last predominant, while they proportionally narrowed the sphere of the two former. Malebranche, as we saw, went so far as to deny all secondary causes, and to rest the evidence of the material world simply on revelation. One more step only was needed to complete this movement of objective idealism, and absorb both man and nature in God. This is precisely the fundamental principle of Spinozism—a principle upon which he has built a system of metaphysical and ethical philosophy with the most rigid logic and admirable ingenuity.

With Spinoza, the development of Cartesianism, properly so called, ended. He pushed its principles to their utmost length, exhibited the results to which they must necessarily give rise, evolved a twofold system of ethics, which to most minds appear absolutely contradictory of each other, and left a monument of his genius, which multitudes have admired, but no one has ever fully adopted. We come back, therefore, now to our own country, that we may inquire what tendencies towards idealism, and what

effects of the Cartesian philosophy, meanwhile manifested themselves in the land of Bacon and Hobbes.

SECT. II.—*Second Movement—English Polemical Idealism.*

The idealistic school, which we have just reviewed, was an original one, and seemed to flow naturally from the very mental constitution and tendencies of those by whom it was founded and perfected. The same remark, we shall hereafter see, may be applied perhaps to an equal extent to that school of German idealism, which in the present day has borne such abundant fruits. With the English idealism the case is different, for whenever this tendency has manifested itself strongly in our country, it has rather been brought out in opposition to the growing errors of sensationalism, than arisen from any spontaneous movement of the national mind. We would not, indeed, deny altogether to the national mind of our country (as sometimes has been done) the vigorous power of purely abstract thinking; but still the fact is not to be disputed, that the practical element has ever been in the ascendancy, and that the rationalistic method of philosophising has seldom been carried to any great extent, except it has been occasioned and almost necessitated by the excesses of the opposite school. Hence we designate the early English movement in this direction by the appellation of *polemical idealism*.



Every energetic movement of sensationalism in the philosophical history of our country has opposed to it a corresponding movement of idealism. It was the materialism of Hobbes which *first* gave rise to the rationalistic method in England, and after that, it was the empiricism of Locke which nourished it ; it was Locke's sceptical successors again, who drove the idealistic tendency forward to the extreme of Berkeleyism ; while it was Hume who roused up the warfare in which the present metaphysical school of Scotland was cradled. To the men, therefore, who took the chief part in these contests, it is our pre-duty to revert.

The materialism of Hobbes was one of the boldest attempts at forming a complete system of human knowledge which the history of philosophy exhibits, and it was conveyed in that logical, and at the same time earnest, popular, and attractive style, which could not fail to acquire for it considerable attention. Edward Lord Herbert of Cherbury was a contemporary with Hobbes, and though he is not to be regarded as a direct opponent (inasmuch as none of his works were written with this precise end in view), yet it was undoubtedly the prevalence of the ultra-Baconian principles, which he saw spreading around him, that gave rise to the opposite principles, which that acute philosopher advocated. Much as this writer has fallen out of notice, yet in his works is to be found the germ of almost all the arguments which were afterwards brought forward in support of the ideal or *a priori* element in human knowledge.

He asserted, as strongly as Descartes did, the doctrine of innate ideas, and maintained as well the existence of a rational instinct (*rationalis instinctus*) as the source at once of man's highest knowledge, and of his purest religious sentiment. The opposition in which his philosophy stands to that of Hobbes, as well as to that which Locke afterwards originated, is seen from his fundamental position—that the mind, instead of being like a blank sheet of paper, is like a closed book. This book, he shows, is opened by the aid of experience, that is, by the influence of the external world acting through the senses, and when opened, shows a number of general principles (*communes notiones*) inscribed there, to which every question must be ultimately referred as to a common and infallible standard. On the question of religion, it is true, his conclusions were as much too sweeping on the one side, as Hobbes's were on the other, inasmuch as he advocated a system of complete rationalism ; but on purely philosophical questions, few men, as unaided and independent thinkers, have come nearer to the truth respecting some of the most important points, than did the philosopher of Cherbury.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The principal work of Lord Herbert is a "Tractatus de veritate prout distinguitur a revelatione, a verisimili, a possibili, et a falso," London, 1645. This work is now little known, owing most probably to the frequent obscurity of the style rendering it repulsive to general readers. The author begins by laying down a number of axiomatic truths, which may be taken as fixed points to start from. Next, he makes a classification of the kinds of truth, which we can imagine to exist in the world. From this he passes on to the *conditions*, under

The professed antagonist of Hobbism, however, was Richard Cumberland, Bishop of Peterborough, a man of the most extensive learning, and conversant with every branch of philosophy as it then existed. It was to the moral principles which Hobbes advocated that the chief hostility was generally felt, and accordingly the polemical philosophy of this period, led on by Cumberland, was for the most part confined to the department of *ethics*. To the unqualified egotism of Hobbes, this prelate opposed certain connate principles, termed by him *laws of nature*, according to which men are prompted to the exercise of all the social feelings, and to the construction of the whole framework of society. These laws he considered to be cognisable by *right reason*—reason being the supreme judge of right and wrong, the discerner of the great law of benevolence impressed upon the whole constitution and course of nature. The points, therefore, where Cumberland shows a leaning to the rationalistic method, are those in which he makes reason the judge of all our moral relations, and maintains the existence of certain natural laws, quite unconnected

which we can be said to comprehend truth; and it is here that he explains particularly his theory of “communes notiones,” which comes, in fact, very near to that of Kant on the forms of the understanding. After developing his theory of the *natural instinct*, as the faculty from which these common notions arise, he ends by applying his psychology to the subject of religion. The best English account of Lord Herbert’s writings is, I believe, that of Mr Hallam, “*Lit. of Europe*,” vol. ii. p. 381. See also Tennemann’s “*Grundriss*,” p. 358. [I have just seen in addition, the analysis of Sir W. Hamilton, which is admirably clear and succinct. . (Reid’s collected Writings, p. 781.)]

with experience, which impel us both to the perception and performance of moral duties.<sup>1</sup>

Contemporary with Cumberland was another thinker of the same order, but of still greater compass, if not of greater originality of mind. Amongst all the early philosophical writers of our country, there is no one who displayed so complete a mastery over the metaphysical systems of antiquity, and no one who has left behind him so vast a monument of varied and accurate learning, as Ralph Cudworth, the author of the "Intellectual System." He belonged to a company of Cambridge theologians, sometimes called Arminians, sometimes Latitude-men, or Latitudinarians, but more accurately denominated Platonic divines, who to a sincere love of Christianity, and a corresponding purity of life, united a deep admiration for the philosophy of Plato. From this source there was infused into the philosophical principles of Cudworth, a strong tendency to the same species of lofty idealism, which distinguished the writings of the great founder of the Academy. Deeply

<sup>1</sup> Cumberland's great work, "*De Legibus Naturæ*," is important as being the first in which the principles of morals and natural right are investigated upon a purely philosophical basis, apart from the speculations of the ancient moralists. In his theory respecting the common good as containing the essence of virtue, he is the forerunner of the utilitarian systems; while in his investigation of the moral laws that may be found impressed upon the whole course of nature, he gave the germ which Butler afterwards so fruitfully developed. For a full account of Cumberland's work, consult Hallam's "*Lit. of Europe*," also some remarks by Sir James Mackintosh, in his "*Dissertation on Ethical Philosophy*."

imbued with the spirit of that soaring philosophy, which regarded matter as the basis of every thing grovelling, and which only admitted true science at all to exist, until the soul, shaking off the trammels of sense, gazes immediately upon the pure ideas of the Divine mind, he looked with alarm and contempt upon a system, like that of Hobbes, which made matter or body the object of all philosophy, and brought down to the level of sense the most pure and ethereal elements of the human consciousness. Convinced that such principles would degrade humanity, would involve the grossest fatalism, and would banish God himself from the universe which He had made, Cudworth formed the plan of tracing all such errors up to their primary source, of exposing their futility, and of tearing up by their roots doctrines, which he saw must tend to destroy all moral distinctions, and overturn all religious worship. The "Intellectual System" was the product of this design, in which he combats every possible form of atheism with much acute reasoning and most amazing learning. This formed, however, only the first part of his proposed task; it is evident from the preface that he contemplated two other parts to complete it.

He shows in the introduction to that work, that there are *three* false hypotheses of the universe, or three possible modes of fatalism; the first of which is absolute atheism, the second a theism without morality or religion, and the third a theism which

admits moral distinctions and religious worship, but yet which makes no stand against fatalism by an enlightened doctrine of human liberty.<sup>1</sup> Atheism, then, is demolished in the work to which we have already referred, namely, the “Intellectual System.” The treatise on Eternal and Immutable Morality, published after his death, was in all probability the sketch of the second part; and there now exists among his manuscripts in the British Museum a “Discourse on Liberty and Necessity,” which we have every reason to believe was the outline of the third.<sup>2</sup>

It is in the second treatise, that on “Eternal and Immutable Morality,” that Cudworth shows more especially his firm opposition to every species of sensationalism. He points out there with great clearness the fact, that the mind of man possesses pure conceptions (*νοήματα*), which cannot possibly be derived from the senses; and maintains, with Plato, that these are no other than the eternal

<sup>1</sup> “Fatalists that hold the necessity of human actions may be reduced to three heads. 1st, Such as, asserting the Deity, suppose it irrespectively to decree and determine all things, and thereby make all actions necessary to us. 2dly, Such as suppose a Deity, that, acting wisely, but necessarily, did contrive the general frame of things in the world; from whence, by a series of causes, doth unavoidably result whatsoever is done in it. And, lastly, such as hold the material necessity of all things without a Deity.”—Intellectual System, Book I. sec. i.

It will be observed that Cudworth takes up these three hypotheses in the *inverse* order to that in which they are here stated. The edition from which the above passage is quoted, is the first, published in London 1678.

<sup>2</sup> This last Discourse, I find, was published about ten years ago.

truths, which must ever have existed in the mind of God, and to the perception of which the human mind may ever increasingly attain. "If we reflect," he says, "on our own cogitations of these things (*νοήματα*), we shall sensibly perceive that they are not phantastical (*i. e.* imaged to us by the senses), but noëmatical; as, for example, justice, equity, duty, obligation, cogitation, opinion, intellection, volition, memory, verity, falsity, cause, effect, genus, species, nullity, contingency, possibility, impossibility, and innumerable others."<sup>1</sup> The rationalistic or ideal tendency of Cudworth shines forth most clearly throughout the whole of this treatise. In the second chapter of the fourth book we have the two elements of human knowledge—that from sense and that from reason—almost as clearly pointed out as it was afterwards by Kant himself. Speaking of the phenomena of nature, he says, "For the sense of man and brute there appears nothing else in it, but as in other so many inky scrawls; *i. e.* nothing but figures and colours. But to the mind, which hath a participation of the Divine wisdom that made it, and being printed all over with the same archetypal seal, upon occasion of those sensible delineations, and taking notice of whatsoever is cognate to it, exerting its own inward activity from thence, will have not only a wonderful science, and large prospects of other thoughts laid open before it, and variety of

<sup>1</sup> Treatise concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality, p. 140. London, 1731.

knowledge, logical, mathematical, and moral, displayed ; but also clearly read the Divine goodness and wisdom in every page of this great volume, as it were, written in large and legible characters." After the systematic inculcation of such sentiments as these, we may without hesitation place him down as the great philosopher of his age, in whose works we find a complete counterpoise against the more popular but far less erudite writings of Hobbes.

Cudworth died about four years after the publication of Locke's "Essay on the Human Understanding," so that we may regard him as closing the controversy against Hobbes, and representing the final state of the rationalistic philosophy before Locke introduced a new era into the history of metaphysics. The next appearance, therefore, which the idealistic tendency made in England, was the reaction that took place after Locke's death, against the principles he had advocated in his Essay.

Lord Shaftesbury, who had been an intimate friend and companion of Locke, was one of the first to point out the dangerous influence which his total rejection of all innate practical principles was likely to exert upon the interests of morality. So strongly did he feel this, that in one of his Letters, in which he is denouncing the popular deism of his day, he says, "It was Mr Locke that struck at all fundamentals, threw all order and virtue out of the world, and made the very ideas of these (which are the same as those of God) unnatural



and without foundation in our minds." Not that Shaftesbury admitted the existence of innate ideas in the Cartesian sense, or held any principles that could lead to a system of pure idealism; but he saw clearly the consequences to which Locke's sensationalism must ultimately lead, and maintained that if we have no ideas actually innate, yet we have a nature and a reason so constituted, that they necessarily give rise to many absolute conceptions, which could never have been derived simply from the intimations of our senses. To the just and elegant observations of Shaftesbury upon ethical questions, the subsequent speculations of Butler and others were not a little indebted; his in many cases were the germs of thought, which they more fully expanded.<sup>1</sup>

Wollaston, the acute author of the "Religion of Nature Delineated," must also be regarded as an opponent of Locke's fundamental principles. The ground he takes in his ethical system, namely, that virtue consists in acting according to the *truth of things*, is a sufficient proof that he regarded some conceptions as absolutely necessary, and as originating in the very constitution of man's rational nature.

<sup>1</sup> See particularly his "Characteristics," treatise the fourth, in which many cursory suggestions occur, which show how near the author was to the development of the theory of a *moral sense*. Leibnitz was an enthusiastic admirer of the writings of Shaftesbury; and Mackintosh (Dissertation, p. 93) considers that they "contain more intimations of an original and important nature on the theory of ethics, than perhaps any preceding work of modern times."

The great metaphysician, however, of this period, and unquestionably one of the first that our country has produced, was Dr Samuel Clarke.<sup>1</sup> He came upon the stage just in the very heat of the controversy, which arose soon after the death of Locke, respecting the philosophical and the moral principles which that great thinker had advocated, and opposed himself to the sceptics, who were driving these principles to excess, with a rigour and power of argumentation very rarely to be found even amongst philosophers themselves. There were three points upon which Clarke more especially bent the whole of his mental energy ; in all of which he showed his strong opposition to sensationalism, and evinced a decided tendency to the rationalistic method of philosophy.

The first of these was his celebrated argument for the being of a God, as furnishing the foundation principle of natural theology. This argument rests upon the fact, that we have the conceptions of *time* and *space*, expressive of certain attributes or qualities—the one eternal, the other illimitable in its nature. But every quality must have a co-existent subject to which it belongs ; and therefore, he argues, there must exist *a being* who possesses these attributes of infinity ; that is, there must be a God. The similarity between Clarke's argument and that of Spinoza in many points, is at once evident. They both started with the idea of neces-

<sup>1</sup> Born at Norwich 1675, died 1729.

sary *existence*, showing that if anything exist *now*, *something* must have existed from eternity. The distinction between the two arguments arises from their different determination of the *absolute idea*, from which our reasoning must commence. Clarke affirmed the idea of infinite *attributes* to be fundamental, and then *inferred* an infinite substance. Spinoza began with the infinite substance, and inferred the attributes. The result was, that the latter rested finally in the notion of substance as identical with God, and reduced the common theism to pantheism; the former, reasoning from the attributes, was open upon other evidence to conceive of them as existing in a Divine personality,—in the God of Christianity. The clearness, however, with which both grasped the idea of *the infinite*, as one of the necessary conceptions of the human mind, is in either case abundantly manifest.

The second point for which Clarke is celebrated, is his theory respecting the ground of morals. Here he contends that there are certain fixed relations in the universe, cognisable by the human reason, and that all virtue consists in acting according to the *fitness of things*. That this theory of morals is correct, we should by no means admit, inasmuch as it leaves out altogether the

Clarke's "Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God," was first delivered in two courses of sermons delivered at the Boylean Lecture in Oxford, and afterwards published with the above title, London, 1705. The argument above explained may be viewed as a kind of appendix to his main argument, grounded on *necessary existence*.

emotional element in our moral nature ; but still it serves us for another illustration of the idealistic tendency by which his philosophy was characterised, and shows the advance which was making towards sound principles in morals, as well as in metaphysics.<sup>1</sup>

The third point (that on which Clarke's philosophical fame chiefly rests, and to which he devoted a very considerable portion of his life) was his controversy upon liberty and necessity—a controversy in which he stood opposed to Leibnitz and Collins, and by which he endeavoured to overturn, finally, the fatalistic conclusions of Spinozism. Throughout this contest, the victory in which was claimed on both sides, Clarke maintained most powerfully the doctrine of Free-will, and accordingly here, also, manifested his opposition to the philosophy which tends to merge the idea of self either into that of nature or of God. Of the three fundamental conceptions, therefore, from which all philosophy springs, those of finite self, and the infinite, held in the writings of Clarke by far the most prominent place ; so that we may properly regard him as the chief representative of the idealistic tendency

<sup>1</sup> Clarke's moral system is contained in a "Discourse on the Unchangeable Obligations of Natural Religion." His vindication of the disinterestedness of virtuous action, and the absolute character of *right*, is worthy of the highest admiration, and does not fall behind Kant himself in its elevated view of moral law, as resting upon the very nature of God. Had he taken into account the moral feelings, and the supremacy of conscience, little would have been wanting for a complete system of ethics.

during the age immediately succeeding Locke, as Cudworth was during the age that immediately preceded him.<sup>1</sup>

The abstruse controversies which were carried on in the manner just described, between the deistical writers of the age, and the metaphysical theologians by whom they were opposed, exerted an influence anything but favourable to the interests of religion. This arose partly from the prominence which was thus afforded to the objections of an acute scepticism; and partly from the abstruse manner, devoid, as it appeared, of all religious *feeling*, by which these objections were answered. Hence originated several bold and remarkable attempts to remove the scene of the deistic controversy away from an arena so remote from men's ordinary habits of thought, as that upon which it had been hitherto carried on, and to concentrate it upon the more general objections that were then raised against revealed religion as a whole.

Mr Joseph Butler, at that time a young man in the Presbyterian seminary at Tewkesbury, entered into a correspondence with Clarke upon his *a priori* argument, in which correspondence he showed the

<sup>1</sup> See his "Philosophical Inquiry" concerning human liberty. London, 1715. Also his Letter to Dodwell, in which he has argued with great power for the natural immortality of the soul. This letter was afterwards published with four others, in which the line of argument was defended against certain attacks which it had called forth. In these letters the metaphysical arguments for immortality are stated probably as clearly as they ever will be. Their conclusiveness neither here nor elsewhere is made very apparent.

germs of that philosophical genius which has since rendered his name pre-eminent amongst the moralists of the last century.

On joining the Episcopal Church, and becoming preacher at the Rolls, Butler summoned all his energies to arrest the progress of scepticism, by showing that the principles both of morality and religion lay, as it were, imbedded in the very core and centre of human nature. In the first three of a course of sermons, which he published in the year 1726, he gave what is still admitted to be one of the most masterly and original analyses ever attempted, of man's moral and social constitution. Drawing out the parallel between man as an individual, and mankind as a whole, he showed, that as the various parts of the natural body evince a mutual dependence upon each other, just so man in society can only exist by means of certain moral relations, originally impressed upon it by God.

The moral nature of mankind he detected with admirable acuteness, under three classes of phenomena. First, there is the principle of benevolence manifesting itself in the *affections*, and holding society together in the strong bands of mutual sympathy. Secondly, there are various passions of our nature, distinct from the principle of benevolence, which go to advance the stability of social life; and, thirdly, there is the *conscience*, the principle of moral approbation and disapprobation, the great regulative power, which governs, restrains, and directs all the affections and passions, just as the

supreme authority in a civil government manages and employs the mere physical forces of the empire.

According to Butler, therefore, human nature, morally considered, consists in a variety of natural instincts, sympathies, and propensions, all held together by the superintending authority of conscience;—a view of things manifestly inconsistent with a sensational philosophy, and containing a decided element of idealism.

To carry the matter still further, the learned prelate went on to embrace the religious as well as the moral constitution of man in his argument, and succeeded in developing the most striking *analogies* between the actual constitution and course of nature, and the truths both of natural and revealed religion. In the sermons, therefore, we have the development of man's moral constitution, as fitted for society in this world; in the Analogy we have the development of his spiritual constitution, as fitted for perfection and immortality hereafter; the two together forming, perhaps, the most complete exhibition of human life and destiny, grounded upon philosophical principles, which exist in our own language. We may regard Butler, therefore, as another link in the chain of philosophers, by whom the ideal element has been asserted, and the rationalistic method employed for discovering or supporting truth.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The complete works of Butler have been edited by Dr Halifax, and published in one vol. 8vo, with a dissertation upon Butler's views, and an account of his life. Last edition 1845. London: H. Washbourne. Never, perhaps, were the moral principles of Butler in so great esti-

So far the idealistic tendency had kept within its proper bounds, contenting itself with reproving the rashness of sensationalism, or controverting whatever dangerous conclusions appeared to arise from it; and had not the followers of Locke attempted to carry their empirical principles to a most vicious extreme, it is probable that no form of extreme idealism would ever have arisen. The rapid advances, however, which were made by the sensationalists, towards overturning the foundations of morality and religion, suggested to Dr afterwards Bishop Berkeley, that there must be something *radically* wrong in a philosophy which evolved such dangerous and pernicious consequences. But then, where was the error to be found, and in what did it consist? It could not consist, as Berkeley supposed, in Locke's fundamental principle, *that all our knowledge consists in ideas as the immediate objects of consciousness*, since that was a principle which had never been questioned from the time when it was asserted by Plato and Aristotle, to the time when it was put into so clear a light by the great author of the "Essay on the Human Understanding." If, therefore, the lurking error was not to be found in Locke's psychological principles, it was necessary to look for it in his ontology; that is to say, in his method of transition from the inward world of ideas to the outward world of actual and material exist-

mation as at the present day. The sermons on "Human Nature" have been adopted recently as the text-book of Moral Philosophy in several of our colleges and universities.



ence. Here, then, Berkeley considered that he had found the root of the whole evil, which had infected the principles of human belief, and which consisted in nothing less than the false conclusion, that our inward ideas must necessarily imply some objective material existence, which they resemble, and by which they are originated. The position in which Berkeley intrenched himself was this—That, as we cannot possibly get beyond our ideas, these ideas, and nothing else, must be the *real objects* of our knowledge. To the plea, that all mankind must necessarily believe in material things, he answered that, on the contrary, all mankind believe in the thing which is the immediate object of perception, that is, in the idea, and not in some imaginary substratum, of which we can never have any sensible evidence.<sup>1</sup> To confirm this view of the case, he exhibited, with great ability, the indefiniteness which attaches to all such notions as extension, substance, motion, solidity, body, &c.; proved by the very same arguments, that both primary and secondary qualities have no existence distinct from the mind;<sup>2</sup> exploded all the different hypotheses by which the existence of matter had been vindicated;<sup>3</sup> and concluded at length, that the very *essence* of an object is for it to be perceived by some mind. In one word,

<sup>1</sup> The clearest and simplest statement of these views is contained in the three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous. *Vid.* Works in one vol. 1837, pp. 67 and 71.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 47 to 50.

<sup>3</sup> See Second Dialogue.

he made the synthesis by which attributes are united so as to form real objects, a purely mental one, and thus rendered matter a nonentity.<sup>1</sup>

In Berkeley's reasoning upon this question, we should not fail to observe, that there are two distinct conclusions he attempts to draw ; the one is, the impossibility of our ever finding a *proof* that our sensations are occasioned by objects actually material (since it is as easy for the Deity to produce them in us without such objects as with them); the other conclusion is, that matter cannot possibly exist, without involving the most complete absurdities. In the first of these arguments, the whole of the reasoning is confessedly uncontrovertible : allow the fundamental axiom, that all our knowledge is representative, and the conclusion he draws cannot possibly be avoided. Nay, further, in whatever way we attempt to *reason* on the same subject, we shall find that the point reduces itself, in the last analysis, to the higher question respecting the existence of an objective reality apart from ourselves. Berkeley never denied a phenomenal world, he merely rejected its *materiality* : and we may yet find, in the course of the following pages, that, however we may rebut the ideal system, on which the prelate grounded his argument, yet still the material hypothesis of the world, in its ordinary sense, is involved in too many difficulties to render it even *probable*, much less

<sup>1</sup> One of the best explications of Berkeleyism is to be found in Blackwood's Magazine for June 1842, where his *Idealism* is defended with great ability.

demonstrably true. In the other argument, however, Berkeley is by no means so successful, since he falls into the very same error which he knew so well how to expose in others. True it is, we never can *prove* the existence of a material world; but equally true it is, that we can never *prove* its non-existence, or show that such an idea must necessarily involve absurdity; all we can do is to reduce the question to its several hypotheses, and then accept the one which gives the fullest and most satisfactory account of the phenomena we have to explain.

That all men *practically* do, and must believe in some objective reality presenting the phenomena of matter, is certain; to deny this would be only to controvert one fundamental idea by arguments drawn from another; in other words, to admit that our intellectual nature is in conflict with itself; so that one primitive dictate of our consciousness being falsified, there could be no shelter from a sweeping scepticism when directed against the rest.

To pursue any lengthened reflections, however, upon Berkeley's idealism—a theory that is so well known, and that has been so thoroughly investigated in the writings of the Scotch metaphysicians—is quite unnecessary; we only request our readers to mark it as the climax of English polemical idealism, denying, as it does altogether, one of the three fundamental conceptions of the human reason, and standing forth a lasting evidence of the necessity laid upon us to search deeply into the primary elements of our knowledge, lest we should build up

our system upon a partial, and consequently a false foundation.<sup>1</sup>

From the death of Berkeley down to the present century, the rationalistic method of philosophising wellnigh lay dormant in this country; or if it did sometimes give some slight symptoms of a revival, they for the most part only appeared in a form too little imposing to carry any weight or attract much attention. Almost the only writer of this school whose works are likely to form a part of our standard philosophy, is Dr Richard Price. The whole spirit, which this most acute and profound philosopher manifested in his *Ethical Disquisitions*, was decidedly rationalistic; indeed, so extensive did he make the peculiar province of reason in the whole economy of man, that he considered it possible, not only for all our moral feelings, but for all our emotions of every kind, to be ultimately traced to it as their source. In his controversy with Priestley particularly, he showed how strongly he viewed the

<sup>1</sup> Another idealist of the same age as Berkeley, whose writings are less known, was Arthur Collier. His work, entitled "*Clavis Universalis, being a Demonstration of the Non-Existence or Impossibility of an External World*," was rescued from oblivion and re-edited by Dr Parr; and has recently been published, with some other articles, in a volume called "*Metaphysical Tracts by English Philosophers of the Eighteenth Century*." (Lumley, 1837.) Collier appears to have been a solitary thinker, little acquainted with what was passing in the philosophical world. He was acquainted with Malebranche, and probably a personal friend of Norris. But he never quotes Locke, nor seems to have heard that Berkeley, a few years previously, had employed the same arguments with himself, and drawn the same conclusions.

philosophical aberration of the age, and how earnestly he desired to place moral and metaphysical truth upon its deeper and truer foundation.<sup>1</sup>

We ought not either to omit the mention of Mr James Harris, the learned and accomplished author of one of the most beautiful specimens of metaphysical analysis on the theory of Language, which exist in our language—I mean the work entitled “Hermes.” Many are the passages which might be quoted from this author, in which he not only disavows the doctrines of sensationalism, but points out the very error in which Locke was so deeply involved in many parts of his analysis. Take the following passage as a specimen. “Though sensible objects,” he remarks, “may be the destined *medium* to awaken the dormant energies of the understanding, yet are the energies themselves no more *contained in sense* than the explosion of a cannon in the spark that gave it fire.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Price was a Presbyterian divine (born 1723, and died 1791,) of the highest philosophical abilities. His work against Priestley is entitled “Letters on Materialism and Philosophical Necessity,” (1778.) In his “Review of the Principal Questions in Morals,” the second section of the first chapter is occupied with a general view of the question respecting the origin of our ideas, in which he controverts, with great ability, the doctrine of Locke’s essay, and shows that “the power which understands, or the faculty within us that discerns truth, and that compares all the objects of thought and judges of them, is *a new spring of ideas*.”—P. 16.

<sup>2</sup> The first edition of the “Hermes” was published in 1751. A second edition, revised and corrected by the author, appeared in 1765. The antisensational views of the author appear particularly in the third book, and in the notes at the end of the volume.

With these and a few other very slight exceptions, the philosophy of Locke may be considered to have reigned supreme during the whole of the eighteenth century, and to have drawn in its train all the chief metaphysical thinkers (of whom we may cite Abraham Tucker as a fair specimen) to which that age gave origin. Dr Price died nine years before the commencement of the present century, so that his name brings us almost to the borders of the period, at which the historical sketch allotted to this chapter is to cease, and reminds us that we have to return to the continent of Europe, in order to seek the first elements of that all-embracing idealism, for which Germany has now become celebrated throughout the world.

### SECT. III.—*Third Movement—German Idealism.*

We now come to a country in which Idealism may be said to be indigenous, and where it has long borne its maturest fruits. The real source of the German idealism must be sought in the peculiar construction of the German mind ; as this, however, is a point into which we have no right at present to enter, what we shall now attempt is simply to show the circumstances, by which this philosophy was first called forth, and to trace its movements up to the nineteenth century.

The great era in the philosophical history of Germany, from which all its subsequent speculations

may be said to have flowed, was formed by the life and writings of Leibnitz.<sup>1</sup> Although we possess no systematic development of his opinions, (since he was too much mingled up with all the learning of Europe to devote himself closely to the expansion of any one particular branch,) yet it is not difficult to trace in the occasional, and what we may almost term fugitive productions of that vast and all-comprehending mind, the fruitful germs of those philosophical principles, which occupy so prominent a place in the metaphysical speculations of the present age. The mind of Leibnitz was cast in a gigantic mould, and formed by nature to tower above the rest of the world around him. By virtue of this it was, that, like all great minds, he cast his shadow before him, and gave more pregnant suggestions in some of his cursory writings, than most other men could do in the combined and systematic labour of their whole life.

One great advantage which Leibnitz possessed was, that he entered upon the study of philosophy just at the time when he could not only see the ultimate tendency of the Cartesian principles, as shown by Malebranche and Spinoza, but could also compare with them the vigorous efforts which Locke had made in the opposite direction. His mind was thus nurtured and expanded in the very heat of the

<sup>1</sup> A handsome edition of all Leibnitz's works, in one volume, has recently appeared in Germany. There is also a Paris edition (1844) of his philosophical writings in two volumes, with an introduction by M. Jacques. From this edition the following quotations are taken.

controversy; and feeling assured as he did that truth and error existed on both sides, he came forward as the mediator between the contending parties, proposing to show, where on either hand mistaken principles had been advocated, and how the controversy might terminate in the discovery of the truth. It will greatly facilitate, therefore, our estimate of this philosophy, if we first of all exhibit the chief points in which Leibnitz differed from Locke on the one hand, and Descartes on the other, and thus define the position which he assumed between them both.

This position may be easily determined. In opposition to the former, Leibnitz wrote a work entitled "Nouveaux Essais sur l'Entendement Humain," the chief object of which was, to controvert Locke's view respecting innate ideas, and to prove the existence of a principle of human knowledge, independent of and superior to that which is afforded by the senses. In doing this, he by no means ran into the opposite extreme, which was held by the Cartesians, perceiving as he did most clearly that their doctrine of innate ideas was altogether untenable, and that it had been exploded indeed by the English philosopher; but while he avoided this error on the one side, he succeeded in seizing upon the very point in which Locke on the other side was most vulnerable. There is nothing in the understanding, says Locke, which did not first pass through the senses, according to the old axiom—"nil est in intellectu quod non fuit prius in sensu." True, replies Leibnitz, but there is the *understanding itself*,



there is the innate faculty of forming ideas, which was altogether overlooked by Locke in his reasoning, and which stands quite independent of sensation.<sup>1</sup> From the one consideration, then, that the understanding itself is innate, though our ideas are not, he goes on to reason, that there are, both in mathematics and in philosophy, necessary truths, whose certainty does not spring from experience, but which have their foundation originally in the thinking soul. These truths he regarded as the primary sources or elements of human knowledge ; so that his starting-point in philosophy was not, as with Locke, the simple unresolvable product of the sensational faculty, but the simple unresolvable product of the understanding. While Locke, therefore, grounded everything ultimately upon experience, and thus formed a system of empiricism, Leibnitz took as his groundwork the necessary laws of the understanding, and consequently gave rise to a system of philosophical rationalism.<sup>2</sup>

Far, however, as the philosophy of Leibnitz differed from that of our great English metaphysician, it stood almost at an equal distance from that of

<sup>1</sup> Book II. chap. i.

<sup>2</sup> The "*Nouveaux Essais*" are written in the form of dialogue, probably after the model of Plato, with whom Leibnitz professes great sympathy at the commencement of the volume. There is first of all an introduction, in which the general distinction between his own views and those of Locke is pointed out. After that the chapters run parallel with Locke's *Essay* throughout, a separate consideration being afforded to each. The principal points of the argument on innate ideas are stated in the first book and the beginning of the second.

Descartes. It will perhaps be remembered, that the tendency of Cartesianism from the very first was to place in undue prominence the idea of the infinite or absolute, and to cast proportionally into the shade those of finite nature and finite self. Malebranche went so far as to deny secondary causes altogether, thus confining all real activity to the Supreme Being ; while Spinoza completely absorbed all finite existence in the infinite, and made everything that is, but a part and a modification of the one unchangeable substance. Leibnitz observing that the inevitable tendency of these principles was entirely to destroy the idea of *Cause*, to banish all activity from the universe of created things, and make all phenomena but modes of the one infinite and unalterable existence, saw that he must go back, and reconsider the very notion of substance itself, if he would discover the source of the error, and successfully counteract it. The great aim of his philosophy, therefore, was to demonstrate, that all substance is necessarily *active*. In this way he thought to vindicate for the notion of causality, which the Cartesians had wellnigh lost sight of, its legitimate influence. "The capital error of the Cartesians," he remarks, "is, that they have placed the whole essence of matter in extension and impenetrability, imagining that bodies can be in absolute repose : *we* shall show that one substance cannot receive from any other the power of acting, but that the whole force is pre-existent in itself." This is in fact the key to the whole of

Leibnitz's metaphysics, and from this one doctrine, as we shall see, originates every peculiarity by which his system has been distinguished.<sup>1</sup>

As the system of Leibnitz is of importance, not so much, indeed, on its own account, as on account of its ulterior results, we shall endeavour to give as clear a view of its principal features as is compatible with the brevity at which, in the whole of this historical sketch, we are aiming. He set out, then, as we have just seen, from the necessary laws of the human understanding, and maintained that all philosophical truth must arise from the analysis of the primary ideas which they involve. To begin with the notions we derive through the senses,

<sup>1</sup> Leibnitz is to be considered as belonging strictly to the Cartesian school, although he swerved from many of its tenets. His method is fundamentally the very same. Like Descartes, he asserted the inadequacy of all ideas derived from sensation—like him, he advocated a source of truth in the human consciousness—like him, he sought for the criteria of truth in the subjective nature of ideas themselves—like him, he regarded the process of philosophical investigation under the deductive or geometrical form. It was the clear insight which Leibnitz had into the insufficiency of the Cartesian idea of Substance, that led to his divergence from that school. Substance being regarded by the Cartesians as a fixed reality, as *the absolute*, philosophy was reduced to a kind of geometrical process, that sought to discover all the possible *modi* it might assume. Leibnitz, warned by the results of Spinozism, reasoned through the rigid idea of extension and impenetrability, up to that of *force*; and by introducing this notion, brought the study of nature to the form of *dynamics*, instead of leaving it in the form of abstract geometry. The clearest statements of Leibnitz's views are to be found in his fragments on "Monadology," on "Nature in Herself," and his "New System of Nature," all of which, with some other letters on the same subject, are in the Paris edition above quoted.

would be to base our whole system upon ideas totally confused and inadequate. The only ideas which are adequate to the full expression of the objective reality to which they answer, are the pure *a priori* conceptions of the reason. But, then, how are we to distinguish these ideas from others, and what criteria can we apply, so as to separate the true from the false? The Cartesian criteria, those of clearness and distinctness, he considered to be imperfect, and proposed in their stead the principle of *identity* and *contradiction* as the criterion in necessary matter, and the principle of *sufficient reason* in contingent matter. By the first of these principles we are to test all those ideas which arise from the necessary laws of thought, such as the abstract conceptions of pure mathematics; ideas which, to be false, must contradict our reason itself, and which, to be absolutely true, need only to bear upon them the single stamp of possibility. This principle of identity, continues Leibnitz, can serve for the criterion of *the true* (that is, of what is absolutely and necessarily true), but it cannot lead us to the *actual* or the *real*. To discover what ideas are valid, respecting the world of contingent existence, we must have recourse to the principle of sufficient reason; that is, we must see what has the most perfect adaptation to bring about the best results, and then judge of everything by its *final cause*.<sup>1</sup> So far respecting the criteria of truth: next he proceeds to the consideration of things themselves.

<sup>1</sup> See his "Monadology," p. 397, *et seq.*

Descartes and his school had made matter to consist essentially in *extension*. Now, mere extension would give a world of fixed and unalterable existence; it would be nature reduced to geometrical terms. But this, said Leibnitz, is not the true idea of nature. A thousand phenomena are passing around us, a perpetual series of movements and developments take place; and how are we to account for all these? Extension alone does not explain them; there must be some other fundamental attribute of substance, from which these phenomena take their rise. In fact, unless we choose to admit that every movement in nature is the *direct* product of the divine mind, we *must* attribute to all Substance *an inherent power*, by which the phenomena of motion are generated.

But, then, where does this inherent power reside? It cannot reside in *masses, as such*, for every essential attribute is independent of all such combinations. Masses are *infinitely* divisible; the limit to which even material substance tends, as far as *extension* is concerned, is *zero*. Every *material* property, strictly so called, vanishes; and we come at last to the simple and immaterial idea of power, as the essential basis of all existence. The simple idea of a force, Leibnitz terms a *monad*; and, consequently, instead of an atomic theory of the universe, we have a system of monadology, based upon the fundamental conception of dynamics.<sup>1</sup>

The monad being indivisible, unextended, im-

<sup>1</sup> See the Opuscula before mentioned, *passim*.

material, cannot be exposed to any influences from without; being indissoluble, it can never perish. Nevertheless, in all monads changes *do* perpetually take place, of which we are perfectly cognisant, and for which we must assign some sufficient cause. The cause, then, not being external, must be internal: that is, *all monads must contain an inward energy, by virtue of which they develop themselves*

We must not suppose, however, that all these monads are alike; this would imply a contradiction, since no two things can exist, which are in every respect the same, without coinciding with each other, and destroying their respective identity.<sup>1</sup> Each monad, therefore, has its own inward attributes, according to which its being is developed. Some are in a state of stupor, as those which compose material objects, possessing, it is true, an undeveloped power of perception, but manifesting only what are termed physical qualities; while others are raised to a complete state of apperception or consciousness, forming the souls of men when that consciousness is clear and distinct, but the souls of animals when it is indistinct. God is the absolute, the original monad, from which all the rest have their origin, and the existence of whom we are necessitated by the very laws of our being to admit. These monads, although they

<sup>1</sup> This is the principle of the identity of indiscernibles, which Leibnitz raised to the dignity of an axiomatic truth. See "Letters to Clarke," p. 432.

have a general connexion in the whole economy of the universe, yet have no direct and individual influence upon one another ; on the contrary, they all contain within them the means of their own development, and each one in itself is a microcosm comprehending a living image of the whole universe.

This brings us to another doctrine of Leibnitz's philosophy, namely, that of pre-established harmony. The dualism of Descartes was now, by the system of monadology, rendered unnecessary, since mind and matter were reduced to the same essence—the former being represented by conscious, and the latter by unconscious monads. The principle had long been acknowledged by philosophers, that two substances entirely differing from each other, can have no mutual influence whatever. But the monads which compose material objects, differ, *toto genere*, from the higher order of monad, which we term mind. It is clear, therefore, that mind and matter can have no influence upon one another, but each must contain the laws of its own development, and fulfil its own purposes, independently of the other. To explain the ground on which this could take place, Leibnitz had recourse to the original constitution of things as perfected by God himself ; who, he maintained, has so harmonised all the monads of which the universe consists, that they shall work in complete unison, and bring out at last the great end for which they were intended. This harmony is pre-established, that is to say, God has concerted it beforehand, and constituted it by a

unique decree ; all things therefore are pre-formed, and God, who has brought them into existence, has read in them from all eternity the whole series of their movements, their modifications, their actions. In all and in each, everything is produced by virtue of their original *nature*, which the will of God, from being *possible*, has rendered *actual*. Hence the harmony between all the parts of matter ; between the future and the past ; between the decrees of God and our foreseen actions ; between nature and grace ; between the reign of efficient and final causes.<sup>1</sup>

From these principles very naturally flowed the system of optimism, which Leibnitz has supported with great ingenuity in his work, entitled “*Théodicée*,” and according to which he shows that God has brought into actual being the best possible order of things. Hence, again, his theory of metaphysical evil, as consisting simply in limitation ; of physical evil, as the result of this limitation ; and of moral evil, as being permitted for the sake of a greater ultimate good. Hence, lastly, his support of the doctrine of philosophical necessity, as being the only kind of liberty which is consistent with the pre-established order of the universe. In the view, therefore, which Leibnitz took of the innate faculties of the human mind, as opposed to the empiricism of Locke ; in his dynamical theory of matter, making it ultimately homogeneous with spirit ; in

<sup>1</sup> See M. Jaques' Introduction, p. 43.



his denial of the mutual influence of the soul and the body, thus destroying, to say the least, the necessity of the latter in accounting for our mental phenomena, and in his theory of a universal pre-established harmony; in all this we see the fruitful seeds of idealism, which only needed to be cast into a congenial soil, to expand into a complete and imposing system. Such a soil Germany afforded, and such a system has now long ceased to be a novelty in the philosophical world.<sup>1</sup>

The effect which the writings of Leibnitz produced was felt more or less throughout Europe, but especially in his own country. In Germany he soon numbered many partisans and many opponents, and the disputes which were thus originated upon some of the most fundamental principles of philosophy, (giving, as they did, so great a spur to the cultivation of metaphysical literature,) laid the basis for the future eminence which it there attained. There was one thing, however, which considerably impeded the progress of Leibnitz's philosophy, namely, its want of a clear, logical, and connected form. This deficiency was supplied by Christian Wolf, who, about the commencement of the eighteenth century, came forth as one of his professed disciples.

<sup>1</sup> The *Théodicée* is perhaps the most remarkable monument of Leibnitz's genius. It is here that he elucidates the question of the relation between philosophy and faith; here that he grapples with the great problems respecting the eternal goodness of God, the liberty of man, and the origin of evil. Modern literature, we believe, contains no work in which there is such a remarkable combination of metaphysical genius and universal erudition.

With but little depth and originality, Wolf possessed a clear methodical mind, considerable power of analysis, and an almost incredible industry, by means of which qualifications he brought the principles of his master, left scattered throughout his miscellaneous writings, into a complete systematic form. The doctrine of monads, however, as propounded by Leibnitz, he considerably modified, rejecting altogether the idea, that the lower order of monads have any undeveloped power of perception, and making thus a very decided difference between matter and mind in their real essence. Moreover, instead of viewing the theory of pre-established harmony in its *universal* bearings, he confined it to the mutual influence of the soul and the body;<sup>1</sup> but, with the exception of these alterations, he contented himself with methodising the philosophy of which he professed to be a disciple, by the strict application of mathematical forms; and having done this, he offered to the world for the first time a complete *encyclopædia of philosophical science*.

As the division of Wolf has been much followed, it may be useful to indicate its nature. The whole province of philosophy he divides into two parts, theoretical and practical. The former contains logic, properly so called, and metaphysics; metaphysics being again subdivided into ontology, psychology, cosmology, and natural theology. The practical side contains — first, ethics, as the foundation of moral distinctions; next, the law of nature, and

<sup>1</sup> Tennemann's "Grundriss," p. 425.

thirdly, politics. The philosophy of Wolf, by virtue of its order and completeness, obtained great approval, and found its way into most of the German universities, where, for the former half of the eighteenth century, it held the pre-eminence over all other systems.

Notwithstanding this, however, it possessed inherent faults, and contained the sure seeds of a rapid decay. The errors of the Leibnitzian-Wolfian school are summed up by Tennemann in one comprehensive sentence, which I shall quote, as being the judgment of a man most competent to give it. "These errors consist," he says, "in the fact, that Wolf assumed bare thinking as his starting point, overlooked the difference between the formal and the material conditions of thought, considered philosophy as the science of the possible, in so far as it is possible, made the principle of contradiction the highest principle of human knowledge, placed mere ideas and verbal definitions at the very head of all research, made no difference between rational and experimental knowledge, and, though following the geometrical method, neglected to distinguish that which is peculiar to mathematics on the one hand, and philosophy on the other, both in their form and their matter."<sup>1</sup> That such a philosophy must necessarily tend to a system of formal dogmatism, is a thing at once self-evident; it was, in fact, the empty pedantry which as such it assumed, that laid

<sup>1</sup> Tennemann's "Grundriss," p. 425-6.

the foundation for its overthrow after half a century's brilliant success.

There were several minor causes that concurred to hasten the downfall of the Wolfian metaphysics. One of the principal of these was the introduction of the philosophy of Locke, chiefly through the influence of the French literati who frequented the court of Frederick the Great—a philosophy which presented a highly favourable contrast to the empty definitions and verbal abstractions by which the Wolfian system was characterised. The popularity which was aimed at by these disciples of the English philosopher greatly aided the propagation of their principles, and there arose from the struggles of the two systems a species of *eclecticism*, which, while it hovered between the different schools mingling together often the most discordant elements, favoured a shallow and flimsy elegance rather than a scientific depth and accuracy. In the midst of this confusion, *scepticism*, as might be expected, also made its appearance ; and the celebrated divine, M. de Beausobre, whom we may regard as its best representative, wrote an ingenious work, in which he advocated almost an undisguised Pyrrhonism, and made the Wolfian philosophy an especial object of his attack and ridicule. It was just at this time, while dogmatism, eclecticism, and scepticism were thus mingling all philosophical principles together in confusion, and beginning to render the whole science an object of contempt, that one of the greatest thinkers which any age ever produced came

forward, boldly essaying to introduce a new spirit into the degenerate philosophy of his day, and to place upon an entirely new ground the whole method of metaphysical investigation. It is needless to say that I refer to Immanuel Kant, the great author of the "CRITICAL PHILOSOPHY."

In giving an account of the labours of Kant, I have had some difficulty to determine whether I should employ his strange uncouth phraseology, and endeavour to explain it by defining the terms as they occur, or whether I should endeavour to strip the thoughts of their ungainly dress, and present them to the reader in a more simple and intelligible form. The latter mode appears to me, upon the whole, more suited to a brief sketch like the present; and to assist the reader who may wish to pursue his investigations further, I shall indicate parenthetically here and there the Kantian expression for some of the more important ideas.<sup>1</sup>

It is a fact worthy of observation, that Kant, although he came from the Leibnitzian-Wolfian school, yet started on the same principle, and with the same object before him, as Locke did. Locke's avowed purpose was to investigate the powers and limits of the human understanding; the purpose of the Critical philosophy, as its name imports, was

<sup>1</sup> A translation of the "Kritik reiner Vernunft," tolerably complete, was published in 1838 (London, W. Pickering), which edition we shall quote in the following pages on Kant. The English reader who wishes to look further into that extraordinary production, will thus be able to follow our remarks, and verify them without difficulty.

substantially the very same, that is, to search into the true origin of our ideas, and to define the proper boundaries of human knowledge. In a word, Kant sought to correct and to complete whatever he considered deficient or mistaken in Locke's previous researches. Both these great men, therefore, on one, and that a fundamental point, thought exactly alike; they thought, namely, that it was worse than useless to set up a determinate or dogmatical system of philosophy, before the mind itself was properly examined, its faculties criticised, its capacities determined, and the possibility of metaphysical science *generally* clearly proved. (This is termed by Kant, *Kritik*; whence the term critical philosophy.)<sup>1</sup>

To this course Kant appears to have been incited by the sceptical writings of Hume, which he clearly saw would undermine the whole mass of human knowledge, unless a deeper and sounder foundation were laid for it, than the empiricism of the sensationalist school afforded. To lay this foundation was the direct object of the "*Critick of Pure Reason*," (*Kritik reiner Vernunft*), in which Kant's speculative principles are fully developed. The nature of this *Critick* is stated by the author himself as follows:—"Reason is the faculty which furnishes the principles of cognition (knowing) *a priori*. Therefore, pure reason is that which contains the principles of knowing something *absolutely a priori*. An *organon* of pure reason would be a

<sup>1</sup> See "*Critick of Pure Reason*." Introduction, sections 3 and 7.

complex of these principles, according to which all pure cognitions *a priori* can be obtained, and really accomplished. The extended application of such an organon would furnish a system of pure reason. As this, however, is to demand *very much*, and it is yet uncertain whether in general here an extension of our cognition is possible, and in what cases, we may, therefore, regard a science of the mere investigation of pure reason, its sources and bounds, as the Propadeutic to a system of pure Reason. Such must not be a *doctrine*, but must only be termed a *Critick* of pure Reason, and its utility would, in respect of speculation, really only be negative, serving not for the augmentation, but only for the purifying of our reason, and holding it free from errors.”<sup>1</sup>

What, then, is required (for such is the primary question to be answered) in order to come to a clear understanding respecting the nature and certainty of our knowledge? That we have a *consciousness*, and that thoughts, perceptions, notions (whatever be the name by which we choose to designate such phenomena), exist there, it were mere folly and useless verbiage to express a doubt. From these phenomena all our knowledge must be derived, and therefore to inquire into the elements and origin of knowledge, is to inquire into the elements and origin of the facts of our consciousness. Now, let us take any ordinary commonplace fact, such as this :

<sup>1</sup> Crit. of Pure Reas. Introd. sec. 7.

—“That picture was painted by some clever artist.” What, we may ask, is included in such an assertion? First, we have the perception of the particular picture before us; then we have the idea of some clever painter; and, lastly, we attribute the one to the operation of the other. But it is clear that these *particular* ideas rest upon general ones lying beneath them. Why does the picture infallibly suggest an artist—why do we name him clever, and on what ground do we so confidently assert that the picture was painted by him? Clearly because we *must* attribute every effect to a cause, and to a cause that is fully equal to its production. In every proposition, therefore, of this nature, however trite and commonplace it be, there are two elements—a *particular* and a general one. The particular one gives the *matter* of the proposition, the general one gives the *form*; the former is a purely *objective* element, the latter is as purely *subjective*. To distinguish these two elements of experience still further, we may try to assign their respective origin. The former of the two evidently comes from the world *without*; for were the picture not there, the whole proposition would never have originated. The latter element as surely arises from the constitution of the mind itself, when incited to action by the outward stimulus. The one, therefore, may be termed empirical, or *a posteriori*, coming simply *from* experience; the other may be termed rational, or *a priori*, coming it is true *with* experience, but not *from* it.



These, then, being the two elements of knowledge, it is of some importance to find the real test by which they are distinguished from each other. Empirical perceptions are contingent, uncertain, fluctuating,—they *may* be in the mind, or they *may* not. Every fresh scene in which we are placed completely alters the sensations, and the *particular* sensational judgments of which we are conscious. On the contrary, our *a priori* judgments are steady, abiding, unalterable ; they appear alike in all men, and are *infallibly* excited by the stimulus of the senses upon the mind. The criteria, then, of these *a priori* conceptions, are *universality* and *necessity* ; whatever judgments are formed by *all* men, and formed of *necessity* under similar circumstances, we regard as arising at once from the subjective laws of the human reason.<sup>1</sup>

What we require, therefore, as a first step to real and absolute knowledge, is a science which shall investigate all these fixed phenomena of our consciousness, and by that means seek to determine the value and extent of our *a priori* intuitions. Upon the possibility, and the validity of these, the possibility and value of scientific knowledge must depend. If we can attain no further than to the knowledge of particular and transient phenomena, all philosophy is out of the question ; the very first condition of its existence arises from the possession of univer-

<sup>1</sup> On these distinctions consult Cousin's "Leçons sur la Philosophie de Kant," Leçon iii.

sal and necessary ideas, and its only safe procedure is to ground our conclusions upon an accurate *critick* of their nature and significancy.<sup>1</sup> We must see, therefore, how it is that Kant proposes to institute such an investigation.

If we look closely, he tells us, at our *a priori* notions—those which are distinguished, as we said, from mere empirical ones by the double criteria of universality and necessity, we find that they are of two different kinds, originating in two different methods which we possess of framing our judgments. First, a judgment may be simply a declaration of something necessarily belonging to a given notion, as, for example, that every triangle has three sides. (Analytic judgments.) In this case, the predicate is declared of the subject by virtue of an identity in the terms of the question; here to suppose the judgment not true would imply an absolute contradiction, since that judgment is in fact nothing but an analysis of the contents of the notion. But, secondly, a judgment may be a declaration of something which does not *actually* belong to a notion, but which our minds are led by some kind of evidence or other to attribute to it. (Synthetic judgments.) In this case there is no identity between the subject and the predicate, but the latter expresses something respecting the former which, instead of being a mere analysis of its meaning, indicates an actual increase of our knowledge con-

<sup>1</sup> Crit. of Pure Reas. . Introd. sec. 3.

cerning it, on which account such judgments were termed by Kant *amplificatory*, as *adding* something to our former ideas on the question.

These synthetic judgments may be either *a posteriori* or *a priori* ones. Of the former kind are all those which rest upon our actual experience, all those decisions in everyday life which are made in pursuance of the evidence of our senses. If I say "all men are mortal," there is no identity here between the subject and predicate, but I attribute mortality to man because *experience* assures me of the fact being true. It is with synthetic judgments *a priori*, however, that philosophy has chiefly to do, and which consequently require a more particular explanation.

Let us select an instance or two, by way of example. First, take the proposition, Every quality exists in some substance. Here we have a synthetic judgment, because substance expresses something not identical with quality, but it is also *a priori*, because the evidence of it is not empirical but purely rational. Again, to take another instance, when I say that every effect has a cause, I merely attribute to an effect what is implied in its definition, as being the latter of two given events; in fact, I do nothing more than analyse the notion. But when I say that every effect implies the notion of *power*, or that every event has an *efficient* cause, I do more than analyse the expression, I attribute altogether a fresh notion to it, and perform a judgment by which my knowledge is extended. Hume's

notion of cause and effect, therefore, is simply an analytic judgment; it expresses only precedence and consequence; the opposed and true notion, which implies power as the connecting link, is a synthetic judgment.

Both analytic and synthetic judgments *a priori* are found in all the pure sciences, and form indeed the very principles upon which such sciences are pursued. The axioms, for instance, which stand at the head of mathematical reasoning are all judgments of one or other of these kinds. Thus, when I say, that "the whole is greater than a part," I merely analyse the expressions, and add nothing to my knowledge beyond what was already contained in them; but when I say, that "if a straight line meeting two other straight lines make the interior angles less than two right angles, those two lines shall meet when produced," I add something to my knowledge beyond the mere definition of the terms; and I feel perfectly sure of the truth, nay, the necessity of the judgment, though it is perhaps impossible to afford any direct demonstration of it. Many other synthetic judgments of this nature might be enumerated, such as the following: God exists,—the laws of nature are constant,—all phenomena imply a subject, &c.; but those which we have adduced, we trust, are enough for illustration.<sup>1</sup>

Now the question is, how do we come to such

<sup>1</sup> On the distinction between analytic and synthetic judgments, see Critick of Pure Reas. Introd. secs. 4, 5.

conclusions as these, which we feel to be real and undoubted truth, and which nevertheless rest upon no demonstration whatever? If I am necessitated to admit them as soon as they are presented to me, it must be because the mind is so constituted that it cannot think otherwise; unless indeed we hold the Platonic theory, that we are merely remembering what we had learned in some former life. Here then we get to the real problem that we wish to see solved—how are synthetical judgments *a priori* possible, how do they originate, and what certainty is there in the knowledge which they afford us? This is the fundamental question upon which the very possibility of a true science of metaphysics rests, nay, by which the validity of all our necessary and universal ideas in every science is to be tried.<sup>1</sup> Hume referred all these judgments to experience, making our ideas of causation, our confidence in the uniformity of nature, and so forth, merely the effects of habit or association; and by that means he struck at the root of all *necessary* truth. Reid and his school contravened the conclusions of Hume by bringing to their help the principle of “common sense,” and pointing out certain indestructible beliefs, which we must hold, and that too quite independently of any experience whatever. Kant’s object was to look still further into our intellectual being, and to discover the primary laws themselves upon which all these beliefs rest.

In doing this, it struck him, that philosophers

<sup>1</sup> Critick of Pure Reas. Introd. sec. 6.

had begun at the wrong end in analysing the human understanding; that they had all begun, namely, by inquiring what are *the objects* of our knowledge, and then had made truth to consist in the conformity between the objective reality and the subjective state. May it not be, thought the great philosopher, that many of those things which we usually attribute to objective reality, are really the effect of our own subjective laws? may it not be that the very qualities which we refer to external objects are infused into them by the mind itself? in brief, may not the forms of thought which logic gives us with such an admirable precision, be the very principles by which the mind is guided in obtaining perceptions of external things, by which it moulds the crude material of the senses into knowledge, and by which it unites together all our perceptive notions into a complete system of experimental truth? If this be really the case, thought Kant, we shall be able to see much further into the constitution of the human mind than was ever seen before, and lay a much more solid foundation for the certainty of human knowledge, than had ever been accomplished by any previous philosophy. To solve this problem, then, is the great aim of Kant's united criticism of the sensitive faculty, the understanding, and the reason; and by this solution, he thought to lay a sure basis for the whole superstructure of pure and abstract truth.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> " Crit. of Pure Reas." preface to the second edition.

The *first* thing, then, to be done in this criticism was to determine the proper nature of the sensitive faculty by submitting it to the scrutiny of our reason, to show what there is empirical and what abiding and unchangeable in it as the necessary condition of all perception, and in this way to find out exactly what is contributed by it to the formation of our universal notions. (Transcendental Æsthetic.)<sup>1</sup> In doing this, Kant took for granted, as a thing lying altogether beyond the region of proof, the reality of our sense-perceptions. The capacity of our being affected by the objects of sense, just as is the case in Locke's philosophy, he never questioned, but considered it as a thing self-evident, that the matter of our notions must be furnished from sensation, inasmuch as our other and higher faculties are simply formal or regulative, and therefore not adapted to supply the *material* for any conception whatever.<sup>2</sup> But then the great point to be investigated was this,—what is it in our perceptions on the one hand that must be attributed simply to experience, or that comes from the thing itself;

<sup>1</sup> "In Transcendental Æsthetic, we shall first isolate sensibility, so that we separate everything which the understanding by means of its conceptions therein *thinks*, so that nothing but empirical intuition remains. Secondly, we shall further separate from this last, every thing which belongs to sensation, so that nothing but pure intuition, and the mere form of phenomena, may remain, which is the only thing that sensibility can furnish *a priori*."—See Crit. of Pure Reas. Trans. Æsth. Part I.

<sup>2</sup> "By means of sensibility, objects are given to us, and it *alone* furnishes us with intuitions."—Trans. Æsth. Part I.

and what, on the other, that is of a purely *a priori* character originating in the necessary laws of our constitution?

To find this we must apply the criteria of universality and necessity as the true tests of what is *a priori* in its nature; and the result is, that there are just two ideas which are necessarily and universally attached to every perception, namely, *time* and *space*. The moment we experience any perception we must place it in a given time, and in a given space; so that these two fundamental notions are the necessary forms of all sensation, and pre-exist in the soul as the laws or conditions of its very possibility.<sup>1</sup> This being the case, every quality in an object that implies time and space must also be *a priori* and subjective. Thus magnitude, extension, duration, in a word, all those which have been considered primary qualities of matter, *inasmuch as they are but different modifications of time and space*, are entirely subjective, and are only attributed to objects by virtue of the necessary forms of our own understanding. Abstract, therefore, from the material world, all these, its time-and-space qualities, and the remainder alone is due to experience,—a remainder which includes nothing but the bare fact of their actual existence. The outward world thus stands to us in the same relation

<sup>1</sup> In the first and second sections of the "Trans. Æsth." Kant develops his theory of space and time at considerable length, answering objections, and drawing his conclusions from it with great distinctness.



as the little objects within a kaleidoscope do to the eye.<sup>1</sup> As we turn the instrument round, they assume all kinds of shapes and positions, which positions, however, do not depend upon the objects that are in it, but upon the construction of the glasses by which they are reflected. That there are objects actually present, is a truth that comes at once from those objects themselves, for without their presence the kaleidoscope would offer no phenomena at all to our view; but all the variations of them depend upon the instrument through which they are seen. Now the human understanding, says Kant, is such an instrument; the eye that gazes through it is sensation, and the world of phenomena consists of such objects. The fact that they do really exist comes from themselves, and is known by the direct intuition of the senses; but all the different forms and aspects they assume are produced by our own subjective faculties or laws of thought. Thus the *now* and the *here* of an object form the actual matter of our perceptions as derived from experience, while everything else connected with it, everything that comes under the idea of its *form*, is purely subjective, and derived consequently from ourselves.

The nature of the sensitive faculty is thus fully determined. Its province is to give us phenomena as the bare, unshaped, undetermined matter of our

<sup>1</sup> For this striking illustration I am indebted to Chalybäus in his "Entwicklung Speculativer Philosophie," where an admirable lecture is devoted to the philosophy of Kant. See Lect. II.

notions, and to fix the two different forms under which that matter shall be viewed, namely, those of time and space; but whether the matter of our notions, as thus perceived, be in the ordinary sense of the term material, or whether it be not, is left by this faculty quite undetermined.<sup>1</sup> The final conclusion, then, which we are directed to draw from this part of the criticism is, that we can never penetrate beyond phenomena into the real and essential nature of things, our knowledge of them being relative to the constitution of our own faculties; that, therefore, there is no ontology possible, and, strictly speaking, no metaphysics. Moreover, as to our synthetic judgments, *a priori*, it is evident that they will hold good within the bounds of actual experience, but that they are by no means applicable to those things which cannot be made objects of direct perception; for, were this the case, the sensitive faculty would not be the sole source from whence the *matter* of our knowledge is derived. On these grounds, therefore, we may have a valid science of natural philosophy, because the objects of it are grasped by the senses; and we may also have a valid science of pure mathematics, because all the relations of number and space, about which it is conversant, can be submitted to the direct intuition of sense (*e. g.* by diagrams), as though they were objective realities; but on the very same

<sup>1</sup> Trans. *Æsth.*, sec. 2. See Kant's "General Observations" at the close.

grounds it is equally impossible to claim objective reality for any purely metaphysical ideas, lying, as they do, entirely beyond the boundaries of all our experience.<sup>1</sup>

Such, then, is the contribution which our sensitive faculty brings to the attainment of real and definite knowledge. But, that we may trace the process further, we must proceed to the consideration of a *second* and a higher faculty, that of *understanding*, the faculty to which we have just referred, as giving form and figure to the material furnished by sensation. (Transcendental Analytick.) Sensation alone could never frame *a notion*, inasmuch as it consists only of bare feelings, which are altogether passive, and, as far as knowledge is concerned, are *blind* and *dead*. Were we endowed only with this capacity, our minds would ever be in a chaotic state, with the elements of knowledge all mixed up there in confusion, but not a single thought isolated, shaped, and made the separate object of attention. The office, then, of giving *form* and distinctness to the material afforded by sensation is committed to the understanding,<sup>2</sup> (*Verstand.*)

Kant was led to the consideration of the necessary forms of our understanding, by the conclusions

<sup>1</sup> See "Conclusion to Trans. Æsth."

<sup>2</sup> See Transcendental Logic, paragraph 1. "Intuition and conceptions form the elements of all our knowing; so that neither conceptions without an intuition, in some way corresponding to them, nor intuition without conceptions, could produce cognition."

of Hume respecting causation. Hume affirmed that our idea of cause and effect is derived simply from experience, and, therefore, cannot be in its nature certain and invariable. In opposition to this, Kant contended that it was a universal, a necessary, and an *a priori* notion, which could not be derived from experience at all, but must be a fixed relation grounded in the very constitution of our minds, and whether absolutely true or not, must be true *to man* as long as his understanding remains as it is.

Kant perceived, however, that there are other fixed relations in the mind of man beside that of causality; he perceived, for instance, that when we contemplate the phenomena afforded by sensation, the understanding views them according to their *quantity*, their *quality*, their *mode* of existence and so forth, as well as their *causal dependence*; and he considered it of the first importance to discover the actual number of these fixed relations, inasmuch as we might learn by this means what the forms or laws of our understanding really are. If the direct intuition of the sensitive faculty gives us the elements of our knowledge, and we can find *all* the different modes in which the understanding shapes those elements into distinct conceptions, then, it is clear, we shall have before us a complete classification of all our notions, and form a table of categories upon sounder and more correct principles than those on which Aristotle's were founded.<sup>1</sup>

Now, to determine these laws, we must observe

<sup>1</sup> Transcendental Logic, sec. 3, par. x.

all the different methods of *judging*, that is, of comparing the relations which exist between a subject and a predicate. To discover these is the direct office of logic, which shows us that there are four different connexions capable of subsisting between the subject and predicate in any proposition.<sup>1</sup> First, the predicate may express something referring to the *quantity* of the subject; secondly, to the *quality*; thirdly, to the *relation*; and fourthly, to the *modality*, or mode of its existence. Each of these four head-categories, again, contains three subordinate ones: for if we consider the quantity of any object, we may regard it as a *unity*, *plurality*, or *totality*. If we consider the quality, we may predicate of it agreement, disagreement, or partial agreement; that is, we may regard it under the ideas of *affirmation*, or *negation*, or *limitation*. If, again, we consider the relations of an object, we may regard its internal relations, its dependence, or its external connexion; which give us the categories of *substance*, *causality*, and *reciprocity*, (*Wechselwirkung*;) or lastly, if we consider its mode of existence, we may predicate of it *possibility*, *actuality*, and *necessity*.<sup>2</sup>

These, then, are the laws with which reason has furnished the understanding for framing its notions.

<sup>1</sup> The process of Logic in determining the different forms of judgment, is regarded by Kant as "*the clue to the discovery of all pure conceptions of the understanding*."

<sup>2</sup> Trans. Logic, sec. ii. par. ix., and sec. iii. par. x. and xi. See also the doctrine of the Kantian categories very clearly stated by Cousin in his "*Leçons sur la Phil. de Kant*," leçon v.

As soon as intuition gives us phenomena, this our active and constructive faculty examines them with respect to the four general heads we have mentioned, and requires under each head one out of the three possible answers that might be returned. When this is accomplished, the notion is put into shape; its quantity, quality, relation, and mode of existence are definitely fixed.

We have thus shown the province of the sensitive faculty as affording the *matter* of a notion, and the province of the understanding as affording the *form*; but then we might ask,—How do these two faculties communicate, and how is the understanding justified in applying its subjective laws to objective or sensible phenomena? This is effected by a mediating representation, which has such an affinity to the matter on the one hand, and the form on the other, that by virtue of its intervention the formal notion and the outward phenomenon become united. This mediating representation is *time*, which Kant calls the *schema* of our notions, and by the aid of which we regard the abstract forms of the understanding as having relation to something objective, concrete, and actually present.<sup>1</sup>

The schema of a notion must be very carefully distinguished from a mere image or conception. Thus, I may have an image or conception of a particular triangle, but the schema of a triangle is the *general type*, to which every triangle is alike referred. The schema of every kind of ball is a

<sup>1</sup> “Analytick of Principles,” chap. i. p. 133.

*sphere*, that of every possible quantity is *number*: and so in like manner every notion has a mediating representation or type by which the general category is applied to the particular object. The schema, as we just hinted, is the general category viewed in relation to *time*: thus the schema of all things implying quantity is *number*, *i. e.* a representation comprehending the *successive* addition of one to one—a *series* in time. The schemata of quality are reality, (time filled,) negation, (vacuum in time,) and limitation, (the transition from one to the other.) And so also in the other cases; so soon as any abstract category, by the union of the notion of time, is rendered applicable to a diversity of objects, the schema of all the objects, which are referrible to that category, at once becomes apparent. The process of schematising our notions, Kant shows, is performed by the *imagination*; only instead of forming a conception or image of some actual object, it here only reflects the general procedure, by which the abstract idea of such objects is arrived at.<sup>1</sup> The whole process, therefore, by which we form a general notion, is now complete: we have the matter from sensation; the form from the understanding; and then the two are united by the intervention of the mediating schema of time, so as to make the abstract category applicable to the actual phenomena of our sensitive life.

Having thus fully developed the process of the formation of ideas, Kant proceeds to analyse the

<sup>1</sup> "Analytick of Principles," chap. i. p. 135, *et seq.*

principles, by which the judgment operates in the attainment of truth. It was before shown that judgments are of two kinds, analytic and synthetic. The principle of all analytic judgments, (which have simply to pronounce upon the identity, or non-identity, of the subject and predicate,) is that of contradiction, as held by Leibnitz.<sup>1</sup> With regard to synthetic judgments, in which there is an actual increase of our knowledge, the case is different. There are certain principles or laws by which we make an objective use of all the categories, and judge of everything in nature by the light which *they* give us. First, by means of the category of quantity, we regard everything without us under the attribute of extension. That all body is extended, is an *a priori* judgment, which we pronounce as the result of the first category above enumerated. Secondly, from the category of quality arises the judgment that every sensation must have some degree of intensity—that we may regard all phenomena as continuous quantities, each possessing an infinite number of degrees between itself and nothing. This is termed the anticipation (*προληψις*) of experience. The third category (that of relation) gives rise to the "*axioms of relation*," or analogies of experience; namely,  $\alpha$ . that in all phenomena there is something durable,  $\beta$ . that every event must have a cause, and  $\gamma$ . that all coexistent phenomena must have a community or reciprocity between themselves. Lastly, the category of modality gives rise to the

<sup>1</sup> "Analytick of Principles," First Div. p. 144.



postulates of experience, which are these :  $\alpha$ . That which agrees with the *formal* conditions of experience is *possible*.  $\beta$ . That which accords with the *material* conditions of experience is *real*.  $\gamma$ . Whatever is connected with the actual by the general conditions of experience necessarily exists. If the reader will carefully compare these principles with the subdivisions of the four head-categories, he will see how in each instance the *a priori* judgment is connected with and springs from the corresponding *a priori* idea. Never perhaps was there a more profound attempt made at grounding the primary laws of human belief, or, as they are termed by the Scottish School, the principles of common sense, upon the ultimate constitution of the human mind, as reflected in the formal rules of logical thinking.<sup>1</sup>

The results of the whole doctrine of the understanding can now be distinctly seen. The judgments which arise from the two former categories are termed by Kant, mathematical judgments ; they refer to the abstract relations of space in the forms of extension and of divisibility, and render a pure science of mathematics possible and valid. The two latter categories give rise to what are termed *dynamical* judgments ; they refer not to the primary attributes of objects viewed *a priori*, but to the

<sup>1</sup> "Analytick of Principles," sec. iii. The deduction of the above principles from the categories, is given by Kant at great length, forming one of the most profound chapters in the whole of the "Critick of Pure Reason."

principles of *existence* generally, as given in experience. On these laws reposes the truth of all physical science ; nay, as experience is only possible through them, the principles of nature, objectively considered, must absolutely correspond with those of the human mind. The more general results of the whole are these : First, that the truth of a notion does not consist, as Locke affirms, in the conformity of our idea of it with the outward reality, but upon the validity or trustworthiness of our subjective laws. If my conception of an outward object, such as a tree or a mountain, be constructed formally by the subjective principles of my intelligence, then, for the truth of that conception, we must simply appeal to the validity of the principles in question. Secondly, it follows that our real knowledge cannot go beyond the limits of experience, since the understanding is merely a *formal* or constructive faculty, and plunges us into error and confusion the moment we make it the test of any objective reality.<sup>1</sup> Such is the result of the transcendental logic ; we must now proceed to the province of pure reason, and learn what further conclusions can be drawn from the Transcendental Dialectick.

Pure reason is the highest faculty in man, because it is that which regulates the rest, and which seeks to bring unity and connexion into all the results of the understanding. The understanding

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix to the "Trans. Logic," in which Kant shows the *Amphiboly*, which arises from changing the experimental use of the understanding for the transcendental.

can only form a *judgment*, but reason can combine two judgments by a middle term, and draw from them a general conclusion. The constant aim of the reasoning faculty is evidently *to generalise*, and by that means to strive after absolute unity. If I say, man is immortal, I pass a simple *judgment* upon him. But my reason prompts me to ask why this judgment is correct; and to answer such inquiry, it constructs an argument or syllogism of this kind: All spirit is immortal—man is a spirit—therefore man is immortal; in which argument we have grounded our first judgment (that man is mortal), upon a higher and more general principle, the immortality of spirit. This process, if carried on, aims, it is evident, at the final, the absolute, the unconditional, in human knowledge, every fresh generalisation leading us nearer to the fundamental unity at which we aim.<sup>1</sup>

To find out the forms of our reasoning faculty, we must proceed in the same way as we did with the understanding—that is, we must consult the science of logic, and see in how many ways we may combine our judgments into a conclusion. Now logic points out to us three modes by which this may be accomplished; for we can employ for this purpose the categorical syllogism, the hypothetical, or the disjunctive, all three of which, it will be observed, seek the same end by different methods. In the categorical, we seek to generalise by means of

<sup>1</sup> Trans. Dialectick. Introduction, par. ii.

the relation of substance and accident, at each step rejecting some of the accidents, and attaining a more universal subject. In the hypothetical, we generalise by means of the relation of ground and consequence indicated by our always employing the form "if." And, lastly, in the disjunctive we generalise by the relation of parts and a whole. In the first case we proceed forwards till we arrive at the absolute subject, which is *the soul*; in the second, we seek the absolute union and dependence of every single thing in a whole, that is, *the universe*—the totality of all phenomena; and in the third case, we seek the absolute idea of all possibility, namely, the *all-perfect Being*, who possesses every possible perfection, and excludes every possible negation.<sup>1</sup>

That which results from the exercise of our understanding, as we have before explained it, Kant calls notions (*Begriffe*), but that which results from the exercise of the reason he terms ideas (*Ideen* or *Noumena*), and it was the clear apprehension of the difference between these two, which Kant considered as one of the greatest services he had rendered to philosophy. Notions are derived primarily from experience; and, as they draw their matter from sensation, can always be traced back to a fundamental reality; they are within the limits of our real perceptive knowledge, and therefore may be ever employed in the construction of a true science. Mathematics, for example, will evidently

<sup>1</sup> Trans. Dialectick. Book I. sec. 2.

form a true science, because all the relations of number and space can be schematised and viewed by a direct perception ; and physics, too, will form a true science, because the objects of *it* likewise are known perceptively ; but the case is altogether different when we pass from the region of notions to that of ideas. Ideas have not their basis in perception—they are the pure creations of the reason ; they represent its perpetual struggle after unity, and can never be supposed real without giving rise to perpetual absurdity and contradiction. In fact, the forms and categories of the pure reason are only intended to *regulate* the use of the understanding, and enable it to generalise its judgments ; never can they be allowed to make good any kind of objective knowledge whatever.

Notwithstanding this, however, pure reason by virtue of its constitution ever aims at the realisation of our supersensual ideas, and strives to make them the signs of actually existing objects, thus giving rise to a science of pure metaphysics under the three corresponding heads of *Psychology*, or the doctrine of the soul ; of *Cosmology*, or the doctrine of the universe ; and of *Theology*, or the doctrine respecting God.

Kant admits that our reason is so constituted that we cannot but form the idea of a thinking subject, the unity of all subjective phenomena ; and hence the force of the Cartesian principle, “*Cogito ergo sum.*” He admits, in like manner, that we *must* ground all external appearances in a real sub-

stance, and thus form the conception of the universe. And, finally, he allows that we inevitably trace all conditions of existence up to the supreme condition, the "ens realissimum," and thus attain to the idea of a God. Nay, he affirms that this procedure of the pure reason is so natural and inevitable, that nothing will ever prevent its being perpetually reproduced; but notwithstanding all this, he undertakes to show that these great ideas, to which the reason ever points, can have only a subjective validity, and that the three corresponding branches of metaphysics, therefore, if they are permitted to stand as vouchers for any objective truth, are pure illusions. The attempt to exhibit and counteract such illusions, is the purport of the "Transcendental Dialectick."<sup>1</sup>

To prove that these ideas of pure metaphysics are simply formal, and cannot be used as possessing any objective reality, or be logically deduced, Kant goes into a long discussion, in which he shows the fallacies to which such a use of them always gives rise.

The ordinary conclusions of Psychology on the nature of the soul are these:—1st, that it is a substance; 2dly, that it is simple; 3dly, that it is a unity; 4thly, that it is related to all objects in space. These conclusions Kant shows, by a long process of argumentation, to be purely delusive, (paralogisms of pure reason;) and decides, finally,

<sup>1</sup> Trans. Dialectick, Book i. sec. 3.

that the immateriality, immortality, and personality of the soul, can neither be proved nor disproved ; that they are objects lying altogether beyond the limits of human reason. Our author next proceeds to the ordinary conclusions of Cosmology. To the argument which proves that the world had a commencement in time, and is limited in space, he shows, that there are other arguments which prove *with equal conclusiveness*, exactly the reverse. All the other conclusions of Cosmology, he shows, are subject to the same contradictions (antinomies of pure reason), consequently that the origin and essential nature of the universe can never be demonstrated, the subject lying entirely beyond the reach of our faculties. Lastly, Kant points out the natural procedure of the reason to form a conception of God, (ideal of pure reason), but maintains at great length, that none of the arguments, whether ontological, cosmological, or physico-theological, by which the being of a God has been affirmed, as *an objective reality*, can ever prove their point, nor any arguments ever prove the contrary.

Hence the criticism of pure reason cuts at the very root of all scepticism on such matters, and shows that these supersensuous ideas, if not demonstrable, nevertheless are most assuredly *possible*; and hence too Kant confirmed his former conclusion, that scientific knowledge is confined to the world of experience, and that the only true metaphysics are those, which have an empirical basis.

Such, then, are the rigid conclusions to which Kant arrived, concerning the speculative reason of man—conclusions by which he hoped to place every future system of philosophy upon a correct foundation.<sup>1</sup>

From the view we have just taken of the pure reason, it is evident, that upon Kant's system its whole procedure is negative. Sensation and understanding combined, *can* introduce us into a world of real objective existence; but reason in *its* sphere, entirely fails to do so; its whole office is *formal* or *constructive*; and the proper discipline of it is entirely occupied in warning us against the delusions we run into, when we imagine ourselves capable of holding direct converse with the noumenal or supersensual world. But now having established these negative conclusions from the Critick of *pure reason*, Kant proceeds to find a positive ground of certainty for supersensual realities in the *practical reason*. Let it be admitted that we have no faculty by which we can communicate objectively with pure being, by which we can know, by direct intuition, the soul—the essence of the universe—and God; it does not follow that we may not find a

<sup>1</sup> Kant's great work, the "Kritik reiner Vernunft," concludes with a division called Transcendental Methodology. He has there given practical remarks on the discipline of reason—the canon of reason, (proper use of the moral faculties;) the architectonick of pure reason, (division of the pure sciences,) and the history of pure reason. I only indicate this, in passing, to show the *completeness* of Kant's Survey of the Reason.



subjective ground of belief in these things within our own consciousness. Does then such a ground of belief really exist within us? Assuredly, Kant replies, it exists in our *moral nature*; for here the whole question of human destiny, with every thing implied in it, finds a meaning and a reality. Ideas, therefore, which in theory cannot hold good, in practice are seen to have a reality, because they are indissolubly related to the laws of human action, and involved in the very principles, by which our moral life is regulated.

To explain this, let it be observed, that the fact of our possessing a moral nature, is one which rests upon the direct evidence of consciousness. We can no more deny the existence of moral ideas and the inward authority of conscience, than we can deny the very categories of our understanding. Reason, in truth, has not only a theoretical, but it has also a practical movement, by which it regulates the conduct of man; and this it does with such a lofty bearing and such an irresistible authority, that it is impossible for any rational being to deny its dictates. In the language of Kantism, consciousness reveals to us the *autonomy* of the will, and this autonomy expresses itself in an absolute moral law, in a *categorical imperative*.

Now, what do this moral nature and unconditional command to right action imply? Manifestly they imply *freedom*; for on no other ground is moral action, strictly so termed, possible. Again, they imply the existence of a God, otherwise there

were a law without a lawgiver, without an appeal, without a judge. Lastly, they imply a future state as the goal to which all human actions tend, and in which our moral existence shall find its completion. Theoretical or pure reason showed that these things were *possible*, although it could never attain to their actual existence; but practical reason asserts their reality, not indeed as a demonstrative truth, but as a truth that is implied in the whole constitution and tendency of our moral nature. In this part of his philosophy Kant rendered good service to the true interests of morality; neither can we too much admire the force with which he repels every low, selfish, or utilitarian ground of morality, basing it all upon the categorical imperative—the authoritative voice of the great Lawgiver of the universe, as its everlasting foundation. It is true that all these matters lie beyond the region of actual science; but nevertheless they are within the bounds of a rational faith, (*Vernunftglaube*,) the dictates of which every sound mind will readily admit.

Between the theoretical and the practical movement, however, there is a third division of philosophy which Kant terms “The Critick of the Judging Faculty,” (*Kritik der Urtheilskraft*.) The judging faculty is regarded by Kant as the intermediate step between the understanding and the reason; and the results of it are certain feelings of pleasure and displeasure, such as we express under the terms sublime and beautiful, or their reverse.

The Critick of this faculty unites that of the theoretical and the practical reason, as it were, in a middle point. Pure reason contemplates *nature*, practical reason contemplates *freedom*, the judging faculty unites the two provinces by viewing nature as a system of means, constructed by the highest reason to bring about certain ends. In this part of his philosophy Kant first analyses the notions of the sublime and beautiful, and then develops the principle of Teleology or final purposes in nature, as the legitimate offspring of the judgment. The great benefit of this Critick, therefore, arises from its connecting the theoretical philosophy with the practical, from the explanation it offers of those lofty emotions which result from our perception of the design everywhere manifested in organised nature, and the consequent notion which it imparts of a final end to which the whole universe is tending (Teleologie.) In this way our æsthetic sentiments confirm the belief of the practical reason in immortality and God, and make the real conclusion of the whole system as assertative of the great fundamentals of morality and natural religion, as could possibly be attained to without an actual demonstration.

Let us, then, briefly review the object, which the Kantian philosophy as a whole professedly kept in view, and sum up the steps by which it endeavoured to accomplish it. The great question of the school both of Descartes and Locke was this—Does all our knowledge come from experience, or is some of

it stamped with an absolute and *a priori* character? Hume assumed the Lockian or empirical hypothesis, and educed from it a system of universal scepticism. On the other hand, Wolf, taught by Leibnitz, assumed the Cartesian hypothesis in a modified form; and by the incessant use of mere logical definitions, as though they could stand in the place of things themselves, gave rise to a system of empty formalism. Kant originally belonged to the Wolfian school; but he so far sympathised with Hume as to feel the absolute necessity of admitting the claims of experience, the very element which the Wolfian school had disregarded.

The question, then, with Kant was this—Cannot the claims of these two schools be adjusted? Admitting the necessity of experience, of what does experience consist? what are the elements of it? does it not itself contain some *a priori* principle? To answer this was the aim of his “Critick,” and the answer it returned was decisive. Knowledge, it declared, cannot consist simply in the intimations of sense, for they alone would be *formless*; neither can it consist simply in *a priori* conceptions, for they would be *matterless*; but it consists in a synthesis of both, the one giving the form, the other the matter. What conclusions then flow from this view of the case? Manifestly these—that valid objective knowledge must be confined to the limits of experience; that beyond these limits there may be formal ideas, but no *matter*, no reality; that the universal conceptions which arise from the synthesis

of matter and form are absolutely true *to us*; but that we cannot pronounce anything to be absolutely true beyond the limits of our own subjective method of viewing it. Kantism, therefore, instead of denying the whole certainty of human knowledge, as Hume did, merely *limits* it: "If we would go beyond our nature," he says, "we must be content to rush into darkness; but within that nature, consciousness is sure and certain."

But a grave question now arises. If we cannot have objective certainty beyond the limits of sense, what becomes of our ideas of substance, of the soul, of God—ideas which all admit to be noumenal or supersensual? "Reason," says Kant, "can never assure us of their existence; attempt to deduce them, and you fall into endless paralogisms; as ideas they exist, but only as ideas, for the senses cannot clothe them with outward reality." Are we then to sit down in the dreary belief that there is no moral law, no spiritual nature, no immortality, no God? Far from it. Reason, it is true, can never vouch for their certainty; but still it has been shown that our consciousness is veracious; that what is indestructibly impressed upon it must be true; and that, although we cannot *demonstrate* the fundamental ideas of ethics and religion, yet, as they are a part of our moral consciousness, they must be accepted as morally certain. They rest, indeed, upon the same ground as does our belief in the categories of our own intelligence, namely, upon the ground of consciousness itself. Although, there-

fore, we are obliged to say that *scientifically* Kant only admitted the idea of God as a regulative principle, and not as implying an objective reality, yet *morally* he indicated the grounds of natural religion with a power, with which scepticism could not very easily cope. In the practical reason, moral consciousness has an entire authority; its word must here be taken as law. And to make these conclusions more certain, Kant shows, in the "Critick of the Judging Faculty," that there is a perfect harmony between the moral consciousness of man and the whole purpose and design of the universe.

From the whole of this view it will be seen that Kant, though avoiding the *ultimate* conclusion both of scepticism and pure idealism, yet stood on a narrow point between both. "Kantism," says M. Rémusat, "is not exactly idealism, nor scepticism. His doctrine is eminently a rationalism, with a tendency to idealism, and a risk of scepticism, through the idea of a universal subjectivity. But the idea of a universal subjectivity is not *of itself* exclusive. Universal subjectivity might be true in the sense that everything is subjective, that is to say, that everything is *thought* by us, even the absolutely unknown, under the form of the possible. But from the fact that everything in this sense would be subjective, it does not follow that the subjective is everything; for in the subjective we find the objective, for example, the non-consciousness of the origin of experience; and this is the point which

Kant accepts as the starting-point in his philosophy."<sup>1</sup>

The writings of Kant form incomparably the greatest era in modern philosophy, and the results of them have become insensibly incorporated more or less into all our metaphysical thinking. The chief services he rendered to the cause of speculative philosophy are the following. In the analysis of perception, he separated with great clearness the subjective element from the objective, explaining more fully than had ever been done before, the great fundamental distinction existing between the *matter* of our ideas and the *form*. In the analysis of the understanding, he afforded a new, and in many respects, an admirable classification of the logical processes of thought, tracing them all to the ground-principles of our intellectual being, and showing the subjective validity of our primitive judgments. Thirdly, he pointed out the existence of a higher faculty in man, that of pure reason, by means of which we rise from the finite notions which lie within the limits of our experience, to those lofty and supersensual ideas which link us to the infinite and eternal.

But the greatest service which Kant rendered to the interests of truth, was that of silencing, by his practical philosophy, the then current objections of a shallow scepticism against the fundamentals of

<sup>1</sup> "De la Philosophie Allemande," p. xxii.

morality and of natural religion, and placing them both upon a basis altogether beyond the influence of any ordinary argumentation. If we add to this the clear and broad light in which he placed the chief problems of metaphysical inquiry, and the truly scientific spirit he infused into those investigations, we shall become sensible how much all future ages will be indebted to this great thinker for the position he occupied in the history and progress of philosophy.

We must now, however, in few words, show the chief points in which his philosophy is most vulnerable, and thence exhibit the part it took in building up a complete system of idealism. The first objection, which would naturally strike one on first becoming acquainted with the critical philosophy, is the total want of connexion between the theoretical and the practical side of it. Conclusions the most important, and most rigid, are adduced by the criticism of the speculative reason, which must all be forgotten the moment we have to do with the *practical*. It is evident that there is here a want of unity, that the ground on which the system rests is shifted, and that many a mind which had been convinced on the first and scientific ground, might hesitate to receive opposite conclusions that rest upon the second ground, and that not a scientific one at all, but only an undemonstrable belief. Can it be true, that two courses of reasoning, both perfectly legitimate, could possibly conduct us to such different results? It seems, upon reflection, almost



inevitable, that there must be some more fundamental law, or fact of consciousness, from which the theoretical and the practical movement equally take their rise, and in the light of which their apparent discrepancies will disappear.

Secondly, there are some unsatisfactory points, which make their appearance in the development of Kant's psychology. First of all, there is no account taken of the power of the will. I am aware that Kant amply repairs this omission in his practical philosophy ; but the question is, whether there can possibly be a complete view of the human consciousness, *theoretically considered*, when an element so important as that of the will, with all the ideas resulting from it, is omitted. Then, again, there is something inexplicable in the fact, that certain pure *a priori* ideas are attributed *separately* to the sensitive, the intellectual, and the rational faculty. How can it be said that time and space are simply the *a priori* product of sensitivity, and have nothing to do with the understanding ; or, on what grounds can the abstract ideas of the understanding be regarded as having nothing to do with the reason ? "The glory of Kant," remarks M. Cousin, "is, that he sought to determine all the *a priori* elements of human knowledge ; but in distinguishing, as he does, the pure forms of sensitivity, the conceptions of the understanding, and the ideas of reason, he wrongly separates things which ought to be united, and all referred to one and the same faculty, namely, the faculty of *knowing* in general

(intellection); that faculty which transcends experience, renders sensuous knowledge possible, by supplying it with ideas of time and space, and, later still, renders all human knowledge possible, by the aid of the categories and ideas, which develop themselves successively, in proportion as it develops itself."<sup>1</sup>

The adoption of a broader principle in accounting for the *a priori* elements of human knowledge, would have gone far to dissipate the delusion of regarding time and space simply as phenomena of our own inward consciousness. In making them purely subjective, and regarding all the time-and-space qualities of the external world as purely subjective also, he attributed far too much to the inward law, and far too little to the outward fact. When we consider that Kant regarded both the understanding and the reason as simply formal and regulative principles, that he admitted sensation alone as capable of affording any of the *material* of our thoughts, and when we unite with this the extreme attenuation of the objective element even in sensation itself, we at once become conscious how near he treads upon the verge of pure idealism. The younger Fichte remarks, upon this point, somewhat severely, as follows—"That which belongs to time and space on the one hand, is (according to Kant) bare phenomenon or appearance, behind which the real thing hides itself; neither, on the other hand, have the ideas of the pure reason anything but a negative import; and so this philosophy, both in

<sup>1</sup> "Leçons sur la Phil. de Kant," p. 153.

its lower and higher movement, remains entirely empty of all reality; it is a theory wisely founded indeed, and admirable in its original plan, but on account of one error (that respecting time and space) in the outset, and the logical consequences of it in the execution, it sinks at last into an enormous deficit, and ends in a palpable contradiction."<sup>1</sup>

But the weightiest objection against the doctrines of Kant we conceive to be the fact, that he makes reason, with all its conclusions, purely subjective and personal. The categories with him are simply subjective laws, while the supersensual ideas or noumena, which the reason forms, are nought but regulative principles, and can point us to no real existence, inasmuch as we have no right to transport them out of ourselves, and make them signs of objective reality. Truth may, therefore, ever be truth, so long as our minds remain as they are; but as we can never get beyond the bounds of our own subjectivity, we are not at liberty to affirm that any conclusion of our reason is "*per se*" eternally true, or that to us there *is* such a thing as truth at all, outside the limits of our own direct consciousness. The ground of this delusion (for as such we assuredly regard it) appears to lie in the purely abstract view which Kant endeavoured to take of the *a priori* element in human knowledge. Anxious to separate this element from any admixture of empiricism, he views it solely in its connec-

<sup>1</sup> Ueber Gegensatz, Wendepunkt, und Ziel heutiger Philosophie. Erster Theil, p. 172.

tion with the human mind. Phenomenon and essence, matter and form, are regarded as entirely distinct from each other, and the effort of Kantism is to establish the reality of each element in its isolation. Essential existence, however, never reveals itself *per se*: we cannot realise in a direct consciousness *the bare essence* either of the soul or the world, and consequently Kant is obliged to view them on his principles, simply as subjective forms or laws of our own reason. Had he traced up the actual character of our ideas to their primitive state or origin, it would have become at once apparent, that nothing is given to us originally in the abstract, but always in the concrete; that essential existence reveals itself to us, first *in connexion with phenomena*, and that it is only by degrees that we view it abstractedly, as the substratum by which all phenomena are supported.<sup>1</sup> In Kant's entire separation of the pure and abstract element of our knowledge from the empirical, we recognise the germ of a principle which tends inevitably to a subjective idealism. The idea of nature, it is true, is not destroyed, but it is contracted to the narrowest possible limits;—the idea of God, or the absolute, is banished altogether from the region of strict philosophy, and made to rest only upon a lower kind of belief; the reason, that emanation from heaven, that portion of eternal truth that is granted by the infinite mind to the finite, is turned into a personal and regulative

<sup>1</sup> See Cousin's *Leçons*, *Lec.* 6 and 8.

law, while, on the other hand, the subjective ME, if it does not actually create matter, yet gives it all its attributes, includes as part of itself all the categories from which the laws of nature, as perceived by us, originate, and possesses the idea of God, in such a manner as simply to imply an inward principle, not at all as indicating an outward fact. The grand error is the want of faith in reason as the revealer of eternal verities. Admit the non-personality of reason; place it on the same footing as consciousness; mould the Kantian doctrine to this idea, and it would evolve a mass of abstract truth which no scepticism could shake. As it stands, however, it has given occasion to the re-separation of the empirical and *a priori* elements, which it strove to unite into an indissoluble synthesis. In this separation the whole of the modern German idealism has its commencement.<sup>1</sup>

For some few years after the publication of the "Critick of Pure Reason" in 1781, it excited but little attention, owing probably, in a great measure,

<sup>1</sup> Kant's "Kritik reiner Vernunft" was translated into Latin soon after its appearance by Born. An excellent translation has more recently been made by M. Tissot into French; and a faithful but somewhat inelegant English translation was published in 1838 (London, W. Pickering). Abundant materials have been furnished by recent French authors, for the study of the Kantian philosophy, of which the best will be found in M. Willm's "Histoire de la Philosophie Allemande," and M. Cousin's "Leçons," already referred to. In English, there is a useful manual of the Critical Philosophy, by A. F. M. Willich, published in 1798. The best account, however, hitherto, is that of Mr Wirgman—"Principles of the Kantesian or Transcendental Philosophy." London, 1824.

to the difficulty and the novelty of the verbiage that was employed in it. No sooner, however, did its real merits begin to appear, than it took the most extraordinary hold on the public mind, won its way into all the universities, and made a complete conquest over the various dogmatical and eclectic systems, which had been in vogue before its appearance. This conquest, it may easily be imagined, was not gained without a hard struggle—in fact, never during the history of philosophy, have so many acute thinkers sprung forth *at once* into the field as under the first excitement of the Kantian metaphysics. Many there were, who ranged themselves on the side of Kant, and sought by all means to establish and confirm his main principles; others there were who attacked them, part of whom belonged to the Wolfian school, and part (as, for example, Weisshaupt, Tittel, and Tiedemann) rather to that of Locke. There arose, also, as usual, from the contest, some bold manifestations on the side of scepticism and mysticism, of which we can at present say nothing, but which will be further noticed in their place.

Whilst, however, this combat was going on, there appeared a few superior thinkers, who sought to perfect the Kantian theory, by supplying its deficiencies, and simplifying its foundation. The most distinguished of these was Carl Leonhard Reinhold, who suggested an idea, which, though it did not meet with immediate approbation, has since become one of the most fruitful germs of philosophical specula-

tion. Perceiving that Kant, in common with Locke, had taken for granted the reality of our inward perceptions or ideas (*Vorstellungen*) as they exist in our own consciousness, and made no inquiry into the scientific ground from which they spring, he fixed his mind upon the one great idea of *the consciousness itself*, and sought to supply what Kant had entirely omitted, a correct theory concerning it.

Kant, he conceived, had probed to its very foundation the whole cognitive or knowing faculty of man, but nothing more; what he now sought to add, was a criticism of the representational faculty (*Vorstellungs-vermögen*), and thus to show what is implied in the process, by which we are enabled to represent ideas to our own inward consciousness. In this process, he contended, we are cognisant of three things—the perceiving mind, the thing perceived, and the perception itself, which goes between them, and exists only as the result of the union of the other two elements. As all our knowledge must consist in ideas, Reinhold proposed by this analysis to lay hold upon the one fundamental principle from which all truth must spring, and in which the theoretical and practical reason of Kant are alike grounded.

<sup>1</sup> Reinhold's principal work, "*Versuch einer neuen Theorie des menschlichen, Vorstellungs-vermögen*," in the clearness and even popularity of its style, presents a striking contrast to the writings of Kant. It consists first of a preface of great interest on the destiny of the Kantian philosophy up to his period. In the first book he points out the necessity of a new research into the representational faculty; in the second, he gives his own theory upon it; and in the third, deduces from that theory the laws of human knowledge.

The appeal which he thus made to our immediate consciousness as the very first and surest ground from which we can start, and the relation which he sought to establish between what is subjective and what is objective in it, though it was all intended to complete the Kantian system, yet gave the first hint at a great principle, which soon showed itself altogether opposed to the critical philosophy, and became the foundation of that peculiar method of metaphysical research, which will hereafter claim much of our attention in considering the more modern idealism of Germany. Reinhold himself, it is true, after a time, gave up his own theory, but he only forsook it to adopt that of Fichte, to whose system, in fact, he had himself not a little contributed.

In closing this sketch of the German idealistic tendency, let us look for a moment at the steps through which it has passed, and at the point to which it has arrived. Leibnitz, the great founder, gave it its first rationalistic direction, and set the example of a bold speculation upon matters, which lie beyond the ordinary range of philosophical investigation. Wolf systematised the different theories which Leibnitz had proposed, and afforded a complete classification of the objects of metaphysical research. Kant next arose from the Leibnitzian-Wolfian school, and laid a new foundation for philosophy, upon the twofold ground of the *pure* and the *practical* reason, making *scientific* knowledge almost entirely subjective. Reinhold next endea-



voured to unite these two fundamental principles into one, by appealing to the human consciousness as the ultimate basis of both. It needed but one more effort to close the door upon all objective philosophy ; to prevent any scientific transition from our own consciousness to the world without ; to make *the me* at once the foundation and the author of all our knowledge ; and so to complete that superstructure of subjective idealism, which was already so vigorously commenced. This last step, though it was taken within the limits of the eighteenth century, yet, in all its important results, belongs to the nineteenth, and its consideration must, therefore, be reserved until we come to the philosophical *characteristics* of the present age.

#### SECT. IV.—*Scottish Philosophy.*

After the review we have now taken of the busy scene that was transacted on the soil of Germany during the closing period of the seventeenth, and throughout the whole of the eighteenth centuries, we now return to our own country, where we have to mark the origin and progress of a school of philosophy, which, though by no means imposing in its appearance, or bold in its speculations, has produced valuable results in the department both of metaphysics and morals, and borne the fruits of much sound and healthy thinking. We arrange the philosophy of Scotland, to which we now allude,

under the present chapter, not because it ever trod at all closely upon the borders of pure idealism, or is ever likely to do so, (since, indeed, it has been one of its most successful combatants;) but because its tendency has ever been to repress the advancing sensationalism of the followers of Locke, and to point to some ultimate principles or laws of thought, which exist in the mind, altogether distinct from its connexion with the material world.

It was Francis Hutcheson (born in Ireland in the year 1694) who had the merit of reviving in Scotland the cultivation of speculative philosophy, after a slumber of many centuries.<sup>1</sup> His principles appear, in common with most metaphysical thinkers of his day, to have been originally founded upon the philosophy of Locke; and he never, indeed, can be said to have departed very widely from it during his whole life. Notwithstanding this, however, he left behind in his writings many sentiments which, when matured and expanded, were certain to stand in direct opposition to the increasing materialism of the school to which he at first professedly belonged.

His first work was an "Enquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue," in which he maintains, that, in addition to the five external

<sup>1</sup> Hutcheson's predecessor at Glasgow was Prof. Gershom Carmichael, of whom Sir W. Hamilton remarks—"Carmichael may be regarded on good grounds as the real founder of the Scottish school of philosophy."—Reid's collected writings, p. 30. He is chiefly known as a commentator on Puffendorf.

senses (to which Locke attributes *primarily* the origin of all our ideas,) we possess also certain internal senses, one of which gives rise to the various emotions of beauty and sublimity, introducing us thus into the province of æsthetics, while another gives rise to the moral feelings. This supposition of internal *senses*, although it kept up the language of sensationalism, was evidently equivalent to the adoption of a new, and that an inward source of ideas, and thus formed the first step which was taken by the Scotch philosophy towards a sounder theory of human knowledge. In his metaphysics (*Synopsis Metaphysica Ontologiam et Pneumatologiam continens*) he shows similar signs of a revolt from the authority of Locke, by maintaining the existence of certain metaphysical axioms, which are derived, not from experience, but from the connate power of the understanding (*Menti congenita intelligendi vis.*) It is abundantly evident, therefore, that this acute, honest, and elegant writer perceived the existence of certain elements in human thought, that cannot in any true sense be termed experimental; and, although he did not reduce his views to a distinct and systematic form, yet he turned the attention of his successors to the weak side of the current philosophy, and struck out the first idea of a better and a more satisfactory system.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hutcheson was the son of a Presbyterian minister, and was originally intended for the same profession. His first work (published 1720) on the "Original of Beauty and Virtue," gained him the friend-

It was during the early period of Hutcheson's career, that Scotland gave birth to two minds of a very different order indeed, but both destined to acquire a European reputation, and to exert a very considerable influence upon their age. David Hume was born in the year 1711, and although he is by no means to be classed either with the Scotch or English school of philosophy, yet we just mention his name, in passing, as belonging to this period, inasmuch as the succeeding progress of speculative philosophy in Scotland, as well as in some other countries, was in no small degree owing to his writings.

Leaving, then, with this bare reference, the further consideration of Hume's sceptical principles to the next chapter, we proceed to mention the other author above referred to—I mean Adam Smith, the father of political science, who was born at Kirkcaldy, A.D. 1725. The reputation of this celebrated author rests chiefly upon his "Enquiry into the Wealth of Nations," (a department of science with which we have at present nothing to

ship of Archbishop King (the author of the work on the "Origin of Evil;") and probably decided his future course. In 1828 he published a second Treatise on the "Nature and Conduct of the Passions," which was followed by his being chosen Prof. of Moral Phil. in Glasgow. His "Synopsis Metaphysicæ," and "Philosophiæ Moralis Institutio," were written as text-books for the class. His most complete and elaborate work, entitled "System of Moral Philosophy," appeared after his death. The views which are therein propounded on the nature of virtue, &c., follow closely those of Shaftesbury. An interesting biography of the author is appended, by Dr Leechman.

do ;) his name, however, has found a lasting place amongst pure philosophical writers from his well-known "Theory of Moral Sentiments."<sup>1</sup> Smith may be regarded as the first great investigator of Man's sympathetic affections ; for although it is probable, that he hardly found a single mind ready to coincide in his view of the moral sentiments as arising from this source, yet it is pretty certain, that there never was an intelligent reader who arose from the perusal of his work without admiring the beauty of the analysis, and being enlightened by many side-views it affords us of the complicated working of the human feelings. It is true we should not attribute to Smith the merit of taking any decisive step in speculative philosophy, or of aiding, by any direct results, its further development ; but by the brightness of his genius, the elegance of his mind, and the charm of his style, he gave a very decided spur to the pursuit of philosophy generally, and filled a place in the metaphysical history of his country, which must ever be taken into consideration, if we would estimate the whole progress of that history aright.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The student who may not wish to follow the development of this celebrated theory through an 8vo volume, is referred to Brown's Lectures on the Philosophy of the Mind, where in lectures 80 and 81 he will find an elegant and lucid statement of the whole subject.

<sup>2</sup> The whole works of Adam Smith were published at London in 1812, in five vols. 8vo. The first contains his "Theory of Moral Sentiments." The next three vols. contain the "Wealth of Nations ;" and the last comprehends his miscellaneous Essays, with an account of his life and writings by Dugald Stewart.

But the coryphæus of the rising school of Scotch metaphysics was Dr Reid, who was born at Strachan, April 26th, 1710. The philosophy of Reid is too well known in this country to need here any lengthy analysis, and we shall therefore only devote a very few pages, in order to explain the spirit in which it commenced, the principle on which it proceeded, and the results to which we may fairly admit that it has conducted. Notwithstanding all that Dr Brown has attempted to prove to the contrary,<sup>1</sup> it must be allowed that the state of mental philosophy on the subject of perception up to the time of Reid, was, to say the least, extremely indefinite and confused. That Descartes rejected the ideal system, as propounded by Aristotle, and held by the scholastics, there can be no doubt; but it is equally clear that he did not admit the possibility of our comprehending anything respecting material objects and their qualities, excepting so far as our perceptions, *in some sense or other*, represent those qualities.<sup>2</sup> That Locke held the same opinion, we have already proved, since indeed the very foundation principle of his philosophy is, that all things about which the understanding is conversant are

<sup>1</sup> Lectures 25 and 26.

<sup>2</sup> The doctrine of occasional causes is not opposed, as some assert, (Pros. Rev. No. viii.), to the theory of representationalism. Descartes held *both*; he held that divine power was employed in *giving us* representations of primary qualities. What else can be the meaning of his doctrine, *that whatever we find in our ideas, must be in the external things*? See on this point Reid's Essays. Essay II. chap. 4. Also Sir W. Hamilton's Dissertation to Reid's works, p. 832.

*ideas*, and that these ideas are the subjective representatives of objective realities. The use which Berkeley made of this doctrine, it is well known, was to shake our faith in the existence of the material world; and Hume, carrying his scepticism one step further, employed the very same principle to undermine the whole solid fabric of human belief, as will be shown more at large hereafter.

Reid, in his early life, had been a complete believer in this representative theory, and had leaned strongly to Berkeleianism, as the natural result; but when Mr Hume's "Treatise on Human Nature" came forth to the world, and he saw the consequences to which the whole theory must ultimately tend, he began to inquire within himself whether that theory were really a true one. This inquiry, according to his own account, he carried on perpetually for above forty years, and never could gain any affirmative evidence on the question, except the mere dictum of philosophers.<sup>1</sup>

The great aim of Reid's philosophy, then, was to investigate the true theory of perception; to controvert the representationalist hypothesis, as held in one sense or another by almost all preceding philosophers; and to stay the progress which scepticism, aided by this hypothesis, was so rapidly making. The course which he follows in order to accomplish this purpose is, first of all to prove that there is no possibility of our tracing the

<sup>1</sup> Stewart's account of the Life and Writings of Reid.

real process of sensation and perception in the human mind at all; that the ideal system of Aristotle is, accordingly, an hypothesis totally unfounded; and that the modification of it which we find in the philosophy of Descartes, Locke, and others, is equally void of proof. That there exists, on the one hand, the mind—the subject which perceives—we are perfectly conscious; and that there exists, on the other hand, the object—the thing which is perceived—we know by a similar testimony; but that there exists any intermediate link or representation by which the two communicate, we have no evidence, either from the testimony of consciousness, or from any other kind of demonstration. In place, therefore, of attempting to account for the mutual influence of mind and matter upon one another, he points us to certain intuitive and original principles of belief, which it is impossible to doubt without incurring the charge of absurdity. When, for example, we see a house or a tree, we not only have the simple apprehension of a phenomenon by virtue of the *sensation* produced, but we are led, by the very nature of the mind, to form certain judgments respecting it, such as—that an object really exists, that it has a certain form, and is of a given magnitude, &c., judgments which are necessarily implied in, and united to the sensation itself, and which, according to our constitution, we cannot possibly reject. These original and irresistible judgments, he maintains, are a part of the natural furniture of the under-



standing; they are as certain and immediate as our simple notions themselves, and altogether make up what is called "*the common sense of mankind.*" From this phraseology the philosophy of Reid has been called the philosophy of common sense—a term which he opposes to natural lunacy on the one hand, and to metaphysical lunacy, or pure idealism, on the other.

There are few, perhaps, who would maintain that this phraseology of Reid was chosen with much taste or judgment; and it is by no means to be regretted that the subsequent writers of the same school introduced considerable alterations into its terminology.<sup>1</sup>

After laying down these foundations, Reid proceeds to enumerate all the principles of common sense, that is, all our primary beliefs; controverts, by their means, the scepticism of Hume; fixes the proper boundaries of human knowledge; and ends by applying his principles to the analysis of the active powers and the moral feelings. Such is, in brief, the statement (and we believe a correct one) of the object and the main principles of Dr Reid's mental philosophy.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The phraseology of the "common sense" philosophy, has been vindicated with great learning by Sir W. Hamilton. He enumerates no less than one hundred and six witnesses, taken moreover from the first names in the history of philosophy, who support either the same terminology, or what is equivalent to it. — Reid's Writings, Note A. § 6.

<sup>2</sup> Reid's first work, entitled "An Enquiry into the Human Mind on the principles of Common Sense," is generally considered the best in point of style and concentration of ideas. Being written when he wa-

Now, in attempting to estimate the merits of Reid as a metaphysician, and the results to which he has given rise, every impartial critic, we consider, must give him credit for the truly philosophical spirit with which he commenced, and the great importance of the object which he had in view. It is difficult for us, who live in a day when the language of mental science has become so much more pure than it formerly was, to imagine the confusion of thought that was engendered by the constant use of the Aristotelian and scholastic terms respecting *ideas*, as the sole objects of human knowledge. The proper fixing of all such terms, and of the real meaning we must attach to them, is assuredly not one of the least advantages which Dr Reid conferred upon the philosophy of his day, and of which we are now reaping the fruits.<sup>1</sup>

The great question, however, now to be considered is, whether or not Reid has completely analysed, and placed upon their true and ultimate basis, the phenomena of perception; and whether

comparatively young, (published in 1764,) it is not regarded as containing the mature view of his philosophy. The reputation of this Treatise raised him to the chair of moral philosophy in Glasgow. His Essays on the Intellectual Powers were published in 1785. They contain the same theory of perception and of instinctive beliefs which is found in the former volume, more fully developed, together with an analysis of our other intellectual powers. The essays on the active powers appeared in 1788, and comprehend the range of *moral* philosophy. The great fault of these essays, as containing a psychology, is their defective analysis. Many phenomena are left to stand as primary facts, which can easily be resolved into some general law or principle; but Reid felt that, under the circumstances of the age he was erring on the safe side.

<sup>2</sup> See his Intellectual Powers, Essay II.

he has scientifically established, without the possibility of a doubt, for all future generations, a philosophical passage into the external world. The appeal he makes to common sense, *i. e.* to those principles of belief, upon which we are compelled to act at the peril of being considered madmen, and which the most rigid sceptic, whatever be his theory, is obliged in practice to allow, was unquestionably a most powerful one, and succeeded in driving scepticism from one stronghold to another, however reluctant it might be to yield them.

We doubt, however, whether such an appeal is able to dislodge the enemy from his last and strongest defence. The sceptic, be it observed, is equally ready with ourselves to admit, that *common sense* always takes its stand upon the real existence of an outward object in perception, and that we must all *practically* act upon the belief of it : but what he denies is, that this common sense is *theoretically* to be depended upon, since in some cases, which he is not slow to mention, it appears manifestly to be in error. To this the disciple of Reid can reply, that there is precisely the same authority to be attached to the conclusion of common sense respecting the real existence of the material world, as to any other dictate of the human understanding ; and that, if we deny that conclusion, we may equally deny every fact of our own consciousness.

Upon this, then, the sceptic betakes himself to his last refuge, and urges, with no little force, that although we must admit the reality of our own personal or subjective ideas, inasmuch as they are

a part of our own inward experience, yet it still remains to be proved, that our perceptions, however clear, and our beliefs, however strong they may be *internally*, have reference to any object out of, and distinct from ourselves. The sceptic thus intrenches himself within his own subjectivity, and though closely pressed and circumscribed by the energetic conclusions of common sense, yet sternly refuses to yield this his last point.

Reid deprived himself of the power of answering this final argument, by maintaining that perception is altogether *an act of the mind*; for so long as we admit with him that this is really the case, it remains yet to be shown, how we can possibly avoid the above conclusion in which the sceptic persists. If the mind has power to perceive any object purely by its own act, there is no absurdity in supposing the *possibility* of its producing within itself the same effect, *without* the actual presence or existence of the object. It is true that common sense renders it highly improbable that such should be the case; yet still so long as perception is regarded as a subjective process, and an idea defined to be *the act* of the mind in making itself acquainted with the phenomena of external things, we are unable to point out to the sceptic what he demands—namely, a clear passage from this subjective activity of the mind to the outward and material reality.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Reid's error becomes the more manifest, when we hear him calling perception a notion, a conception, a conclusion, &c.; or when we read of perception being applicable to distant realities, and objects of memory. This is in fact breaking down the very distinction between

The position that we must assume, if we would complete what Reid so nobly commenced, is, that the very essence of perception consists in a *felt relation* between mind and matter, that instead of being *wholly* the act of the mind, it is the union of the subjective and the objective, necessarily arising from man's constitution as a being composed of soul and body. If you look to the acts of the will, you feel them to be purely personal or subjective;—if you look to an act of the reason, you feel that it refers simply to abstract truth, which the mind of itself could work out; but if you analyse a perception you at once detect in it another element, which does not depend upon the *will* or the *reason*, but upon some other existence out of, and distinct from ourselves; so that perception, instead of being an operation of the mind, as Reid regarded it, is, in fact, an *intuitive felt relation* between self and nature, between the me and the not-me. The one of these related terms is, in truth, as much *given* in every act of perception as the other, neither can we abstract either the subject or the object without destroying the very essence of the thing itself.

It is this felt relation which probably suggested, and which for so many centuries kept alive the notion, that there was some link, material or spiritual, by which the objective and the subjective in nature were united; a link which Reid powerfully demonstrated to have no reality, and the sup-

intellection and intuition, between presentative and representative knowledge, which it was his main object to make good. On this see Sir W. Hamilton's "Reid," Note D.\* sec. iv.

position of which is rendered altogether unnecessary when we regard perception, as the *relation* which we feel to exist between our own minds and the external world. This, therefore, we consider as the scientific or theoretical form of the doctrine of *immediate* perception, which the Scottish philosopher rested simply on the ground of a practical belief, and denominated a principle of common sense.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> To see the principal points of this Critique more fully developed and eloquently stated, the student may consult Cousin's "Cours de la Philosophie Morale," Leçons 7 and 8. Against this view of the case, Dr Chalmers (North British Rev., Feb. 1847) objects, that in childhood there is *perception*, but no reflex view of self, no *relation* felt between the me and the not-me. The Doctor forgets that it is a part of the doctrine of the spontaneous development of the mind, (a doctrine which he expressly admits, p. 297,) that every element which afterwards enters into our reflective life, was originally at work in the spontaneous. It is very clear that the child has, at first, no *reflective* consciousness of the elements of perception, or indeed of anything else, but this is no argument against those elements being actually *there*. Sunk as he may be in the object, yet the whole process logically implies the subject, which in fact is never for a single moment lost sight of, as the conscious unity, in which all our apperceptions find their synthesis. To suppose the *subject actually lost* in the object, would be to suppose the loss of the sense of personality. The very idea of presentative knowledge, is that of subject and object, standing immediately face to face, without even a *notion* or conception between them.

I have just had the good fortune to consult Sir W. Hamilton's most masterly notes upon this subject, and I cannot see that the view of perception there given, essentially differs from the above, except in its fuller and richer scientific development. He regards the human organism as the great field of perception. And what is the organism? "*A material subject.*" It is just the region in which self and not self, subject and object, mysteriously blend, and by that blending, place themselves in immediate communication. What then is perception, but the expression of that relation,—the attributes of the material, placed consciously side by side with the personality of the spiritual?

Against Mr Hume's attack upon the idea of causality, and his attempt to invalidate the proof thence derived for the existence of God; Reid appears to us to have dealt a more complete and effective blow, than he did against his argument respecting the material world. Hume first assumed *experience* as the sole foundation for our knowledge, and then of course easily demonstrated, that supersensual ideas, like that of cause, or of the Deity, can have no real basis whatever *in fact*. Reid denied that experience is the only source from which truth can be derived, but pointed out the existence of certain intellectual and *necessary* judgments beyond the bounds of all experience, and proved that the belief in a sufficient cause, wherever we observe an effect, is one of them. It is true he did not probe the whole question of our instinctive beliefs to its centre, but, nevertheless, he established their reality on so solid a basis, that the truth which they convey was shown to be as valid as any ordinary evidence could make it. A more subtle analysis of the first principles of human knowledge might certainly have placed these beliefs in a clearer light, and reduced them to a smaller compass; but the only effect of this would have been, to give them a more scientific character than was done by the rough sketch which Reid left behind him, and not to alter materially the drift of his main argument.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kant reproached Reid with mistaking the very difficulty which Hume wished to have alleviated. He supposed that Reid simply took his stand upon *the fact*, that causation is practically admitted by all

Whatever objections, therefore, might be brought against the philosophy of common sense, we conceive that they must be for the most part negative. That Reid has done much for the advancement of mental science, is almost universally admitted ; to complain that he did not accomplish *more*, or follow out the track which he opened to its furthest results, is perhaps unreasonable ; since we ought rather to look for the completion of his labours from the hands of his followers, than demand from himself at once the foundation and the superstructure.

We cannot but regard it, however, as unfortunate, that Reid should have framed his idea of philosophy so completely upon the model of the natural sciences, that he should have determined to confine it almost entirely within the narrow limits of psychology, and attempt little beyond the mere classification and establishment of internal phenomena. The psychological *method*, which he followed, we regard as excellent, nay, as the only true one, since it is absolutely necessary to determine the power and validity of the instrument by which all our knowledge is acquired, before we define what that knowledge is, and to what extent it can reach. But by making philosophy too exclusively the science of internal facts, by placing it in co-ordination with other dis-

men, and did nothing towards elucidating the *origin* of the idea. It should not be forgotten, however, that Reid applied the very same tests as Kant himself, those of universality and necessity, by which to prove the validity of the category, and show it to lie embosomed in the very centre of our constitution.



tinct branches of human research, by separating it virtually from the rest of our knowledge, instead of placing it at the foundation of it all, he gave rise to that philosophical tendency, which has since virtually excluded many of the most important questions from the investigation of the Scottish metaphysicians. There are links of connexion which unite the science of internal phenomena with a far wider field of research. The close intercourse which exists between the human organism and the soul, makes it necessary to take under consideration many physical phenomena as illustrative of the phenomena of consciousness. In the wondrous fact of muscular exertion, we see force and matter, the subject and object, brought into direct co-operation—a co-operation which leads us to conceive and develop the great idea of *power* in its origin and its effects. From this point of observation, we are led into the realms of nature. Power there is *there*, for how else can we conceive of the endless succession of operations, which are going forward around us? Neither is nature a *lifeless* mechanism. Fraught with the great ideas which spiritual contemplation affords, we approach nature as essentially a system of living forces, embodying in its forms and processes the thoughts of a vast and eternal mind. Taking wing from this thought, we soar above the soul and nature alike, to the great centre of all *power*—the great moral exemplar of all *mind*—to God himself. Looking down from that elevation, we again scan the realms of creation with a new light upon them—

we see *thought* exhibited in the very lowest organic structure—and trace it becoming more expressive of form and beauty in the plant. In the animal kingdom we see it exhibiting a still more distinct purpose—and at length, in man, giving an image of the very mind from which it sprang. History develops the infinite in man still further; and religion, in its onward progress as a *divine life*, seeks to make its expression more pure and perfect, till in the new creation the divine nature shall shine forth from the very mainspring and energy of the human will. By separating, on the contrary, the realms of human contemplation from each other, they lose their deepest significancy. We look then upon mind as a series of facts, the clue to whose right understanding is lost by their entire isolation from everything else in which the *divine thought* expresses itself. We look upon nature as a wondrous dance of atoms; but, separated from mind, we see not that every beauteous form is the articulate expression of some great idea; yea, and when we look up beyond the creation to Deity itself, we are chilled by our utter isolation, until we begin to perceive the divine thinking, all within and around, and learn of a truth “that He is not far from every one of us.” In this way, then, we would seek to rise into a loftier region of thought, to a kind of “*prima philosophia*,” where the sciences of mind, of matter, and of Deity, all unite in one.

Instead, therefore, of entirely separating the investigation of mental from that of all other pheno-

mena, we should here perceive their mutual relations, and learn to gaze upon the universe both of mind and matter as a whole, the one harmonious production of the Infinite Intelligence. In this view of the case we should contemplate man in his mysterious connexion with nature, and nature in its relation to humanity, while the last and crowning problem would be, to show how they both subsist in God. A system embracing this sweep of investigation, might be termed philosophy in its highest sense.<sup>1</sup>

Had Reid pointed out this as the ultimate tendency of metaphysical research, we believe that his successors could have built upon such a foundation a noble superstructure of speculative philosophy; but having discouraged this attempt in the outset, his successors have for the most part trodden the path of mere psychological observation, until the science which might soar to the very noblest efforts of the human intellect, and strive to solve the great problems of man, the universe, and their Creator, has dwindled down to one of altogether secondary interest in the hands of some of its more recent advocates.<sup>2</sup>

The immediate followers of Reid accordingly, true to the sentiments of their master, were chiefly em-

<sup>1</sup> For further remarks on this subject, see chap. v. sec. 1.

<sup>2</sup> I attribute to this isolation the great practical fruitlessness of the Scottish metaphysics. A work begun so *nobly* by Reid, when he took his stand upon the central principles of human belief, ought to have infused long ere this a new life into all the moral sciences.

ployed in illustrating and defining the principles of common sense as the data of all real philosophy. Beattie's chief merit (independently of his valuable disquisitions on moral and æsthetical subjects) consists in the clear distinction he makes between the axioms of common sense, and the logical deductions of our reason. His whole doctrine of evidence, as grounded on this distinction, contains much that is highly valuable and interesting; but there is no analysis of *pure reason*, no attempt to raise the science of that which *is*, up to the higher science of that which *must be*, nor any hint at the very existence of a deeper principle on which the axioms of common sense themselves are all grounded.

In Oswald we see a still more slavish devotee to the same idol, inasmuch as he makes *common sense*, in its most popular acceptation, the supreme judge in all philosophical investigations; while Ferguson at once cuts off the approach to a higher metaphysical science, by laying down as the very principle of all science, that human knowledge is confined entirely to the observation of facts, and the discovery of general laws, as the result of our induction. In doing so, he overlooks altogether the great truth, that there are conceptions by which alone the facts are intelligible, and axioms upon which the very process of induction rests; while in holding up *experience* as marking the limits of our philosophical knowledge, he forgets that there are laws of thought, which are assuredly prior to all experience.

If, then, such *a priori* laws really exist, why, we ask, should there not be one branch of philosophy, whose object is to inquire into them, and not only to point out our primary or necessary beliefs, but to trace them to their origin, as Kant does, in the actual forms of the understanding or the reason? We forbear, however, to pursue our remarks on the Scotch philosophy any further at present, since it has found another, and perhaps an abler expositor in Dugald Stewart, whose works we shall have another opportunity of criticising, when we come to consider the Scottish school, as it appears upon the stage of the nineteenth century. Any further remarks upon the deficiencies of Scottish metaphysics we shall leave for that occasion.

## CHAPTER III.

### ON THE DIFFERENT FORMS OF SCEPTICISM AND MYSTICISM WHICH HAVE ARISEN OUT OF THE PRECEDING SYSTEMS OF PHILOSOPHY.

IN the former chapters the two chief and opposite methods of philosophising have been at some length explained, and the history of their principal movements down to the present century briefly related. The observation of outward facts, so strongly encouraged by sensationalism, has been shown well adapted to originate a valid school of physical science, while the habit of reflection upon the inward operations of the mind, which is more commonly nurtured by idealism, has unquestionably produced in its turn many highly interesting and valuable results of another description. Either of these systems, however, when it would embrace the whole sphere of human knowledge, and interdict every idea which has not come through one peculiar channel, soon conducts us to the most false and injurious results.

Let us see this with regard to sensationalism. The whole process of sensation, we are conscious, is passive; the moment, therefore, we attempt, like

Condillac, to reduce all our notions to different species of transformed sensations, we virtually deny the natural liberty or energy of the mind, and make humanity itself but an ingenious piece of mechanism, which is moved hither and thither by forces impressed upon it from the outward world. Human freedom accordingly perishes under the hands of a bold sensationalism. Nor is it alone the *moral* nature which is stripped of its grandeur by these principles—the foundations of truth itself are likewise undermined, and the road to scepticism prepared. Knowledge, which comes to us simply through our sensations, can have nothing fixed and absolute about it. Its truth must be relative to the construction of our material organs, and can never attain to a necessary and universal character. In other words, there can be no such thing as truth, which may not at some time prove error; so that the whole framework of our knowledge is rendered insecure.

Idealism, on the contrary, leads us just as far from truth in the other direction. Neglecting the peculiar element which exists in all our perceptions, and by which we are inseparably linked to the material world, it first of all attempts to deduce the notion of matter by a logical process from our purely rational ideas; failing, however, to afford satisfaction by this process, it begins to undermine the validity of the notion itself, and ends at length in its positive denial. Both sensationalism, therefore, and idealism, when exclusively pursued and

developed to their furthest results, lead us into a labyrinth of error, from which it appears impossible for any philosophy to extricate us: they both give us the thread by which we may enter into the very centre of the metaphysical maze, but, having conducted us there, they snap it asunder, and leave us in perplexity which way to turn, in order to retrace our steps. The consequence infallibly is, that philosophy becomes distrusted, that the conclusions of reason are set at nought, and a boastful scepticism is engendered, which magnifies itself against all science, and builds itself up upon the metaphysical errors which it can deride, but not correct.

We would not, however, assert that *all* scepticism is of this pernicious character; for just in the same manner as we have seen sensationalism and idealism to have a good side as well as a bad, so likewise scepticism, when confined within its proper limits, has its uses, and may be made subservient to the development of truth. All that we desire now to point out is the fact, that philosophical paradoxes, whether they be derived from a shallow or a deep metaphysical system, have a natural tendency to shake our confidence in the power and authority of the human reason, and engender a disposition to regard scepticism as our only safeguard against philosophical conclusions, which we almost instinctively refuse to admit.

The fact, however, that all extremes will at length meet, is strikingly illustrated in the case now



before us. The extreme of scepticism is sure to lead into the central regions of mysticism, the most sweeping unbelief into the very worst follies of credulity. The greatest unbeliever is of all men the most credulous; he rejects, perhaps, a thousand truths which rest upon a solid and satisfactory evidence, but then is obliged to accept some crude system of his own, into which none of these truths (to save his consistency) are permitted to enter. The sceptic, for example, who denies the divine origin of Christianity, may often appear at first sight rational in his objections, so long as he is engaged in pulling down the common belief of Christendom; but the moment he is called upon to build up a system of his own, the moment he is required to account for the facts of the case upon some other hypothesis, he soon begins to draw far more largely than his opponents upon the very credulity which he has derided. And not only this, but the more universal the scepticism, the greater must be the credulity by which it is followed; because exactly in proportion to the number of facts which are first rejected, must be the paucity which are left behind on which to construct a new system. From these considerations, therefore, we can easily see how naturally, and almost necessarily, in the march of intellectual philosophy, mysticism springs out of the spirit of scepticism.

The use of scepticism is to check a too ambitious and rapid generalisation, to discover all the flaws in the foundations of human science, which might

in time endanger the safety of the superstructure ; but, having performed this duty, it must cease, and leave the completion of the edifice to other hands. Instead of this, the sceptical philosopher perchance, not content with chastising error (his proper office), proceeds to construct for himself a system of speculative truth : and then what is the result ? He has already sported with the authority of the human reason, he has undermined some of its most obvious conclusions ; and now that he has placed these beyond the pale of certainty, he must have recourse to any other element, by which he can supply the place of that which he has rejected. Such an element he finds in the undefined impulses of our spiritual nature, or the spontaneous working of our mental instincts ; and from these, accordingly, he seeks to originate a system of truth, to which he regards the power of reason quite unable to attain, and which is rightly attributed to the workings of *mysticism*. It is the philosophical *sceptic*, therefore, who first shakes the confidence which men had reposed in the authority of their reason ; and it is the *mystic* who, to supply its place, introduces that new element of faith or feeling, by one of which his philosophy is always characterised. The ultimate relationship, however, existing between these two movements, will be better seen in the historical sketch to which we now proceed.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On the manner in which scepticism and mysticism spring out of the other philosophical extremes, see Cousin's "Histoire de la Philosophie," Leçon iv.

SECT. I.—*Scepticism and Mysticism on the Continent, from the age of Descartes to the commencement of the nineteenth century.*

The two master-minds who gave its first tendencies to the modern philosophy of France, were Gassendi and Descartes. The Gassendists, like Hobbes in our own country, adopted many of the extreme results of sensationalism ; while the Cartesians, as we have before seen, leaned with an equal partiality to idealism. In the contests which arose between these two schools, the weak sides of both were alternately held up to view, and the baneful results exhibited, to which either of them, if rigidly followed out, would invariably lead. The juncture then had arrived, at which scepticism was needed to pull down, on either hand, what was weak and unsatisfactory in their respective principles ; and accordingly, just at this juncture, scepticism actually made its appearance, to perform the work assigned it in the progress of human knowledge.

Previous, however, to our bringing the chief actors in this scene before our attention, there is one caution which we must strongly impress upon the mind of every reader ; that is, not to confound theological with philosophical scepticism. By theological scepticism we mean a rejection of the authority of natural or revealed religion ; by philosophical scepticism, we mean a distrust of the

validity of the intellectual faculties, and the authority of the human reason. The two may, in a few instances, have been united, as they were in Hume; but in the great majority of instances, the case is far otherwise. Religious scepticism has, in fact, more commonly than not, been found among the disciples of an extreme sensationalism and idealism; the former proceeding more frequently to atheistical, the latter to pantheistical results; while philosophical scepticism, so far from being identified with this, arises frequently from a mistaken zeal for enlarging the authority of religious faith.

With this one observation premised, we now return to consider the different shades of scepticism and mysticism on the continent of Europe, from the period to which we have just alluded, to the opening of the present century.

(A.) FIRST PERIOD—ORIGINATING FROM DESCARTES AND  
GASSENDI.

The first school of philosophical scepticism in France was precisely of the nature just described. Its disciples were, for the most part, ecclesiastics, who attempted to save the orthodoxy of the Catholic Church, by impugning the sufficiency of that reason, by the aid of which the philosophers of their day were deducing conclusions anything but consistent with the common belief of Catholic Christianity. One of the most learned of this class was Peter Daniel Huet, Bishop of Avranches, born

at Caen, A.D. 1630. In his early youth Huet had been instructed in the Cartesian philosophy, but finding this unsatisfactory, he went over to the Gassendists, in order to see if any of his difficulties could be removed by the tenets of that school. Finding many of their doctrines to be in direct opposition to his religious faith, he became altogether disgusted with speculative reasoning, and sought a refuge in philosophical scepticism.<sup>1</sup>

His sceptical opinions may be stated in the two following positions. First, that although there may be, and undoubtedly is, such a thing as objective reality, yet the human reason is too feeble, and has to encounter too many obstacles in the acquisition of knowledge, to be ever absolutely certain, whether our ideas correspond with that reality to any degree of accuracy or not. Secondly, that the only principle by which we can attain to certainty is faith—a principle which lies altogether beyond the reach of scepticism, inasmuch as it arises not from our natural faculties, but from an immediate operation of the Divine mind.

The chief work in which Huet's sceptical principles are embodied, is entitled, "An Essay concerning the Weakness of the Human Understand-

<sup>1</sup> In the preface to his "Essay on the Weakness of the Human Understanding," the author gives a singular but honest account of his own experience in the search for truth. It appears from the memoirs of his own life, that Huet was introduced into the sceptical philosophy by M. Cornisy, who was president of the parliament of Aix in Provence, and was banished to Caen by order of the court.

ing," which was written about the year 1690,<sup>1</sup> to follow his "*Censura Philosophiæ Cartesianæ*." The work is in three books, the first of which is intended to prove, that truth cannot be known with absolute certainty by the help of reason. This position he strengthens by thirteen arguments, in which he makes his appeal to the inspired penmen, to the imperfection of the senses as a means of knowledge, to the insufficiency of the intellectual powers, to the impossibility of verifying the objective validity of our subjective ideas, and finally to the opinion of all the most celebrated philosophers of antiquity. The second book makes us acquainted with the legitimate way of philosophising, which, he affirms, is only found, when we learn to supply the defects of reason by the principle of faith—a principle which, although it cannot lead to demonstrative certainty, yet gives us an evidence of truth upon which we can fully repose.<sup>2</sup> The third book is entirely occupied in answering seven objections which he supposes might be urged against his principles. The whole work gives us a remarkable instance of the union of philosophical scepticism and religious cre-

<sup>1</sup> The original work I have not seen, but have in my possession an excellent English translation, by Edw. Combe, A.M., published in London, A.D. 1725.

<sup>2</sup> The whole theory of Huet is summed up in this sentence—"As, then, in matters of faith, faith comes in to the aid of fluctuating reason, so in all other things we know thereby [by reason] it assists to assure and relieve us in our doubts, and reinstate reason in a right it was divested of; that is to say, the cognisance of truth, which it naturally desires."—Book II. chap. ii.

dulity in a man of most universal attainments and profound understanding.

A far more noted instance, however, of this species of philosophical scepticism, mingled at the same time with a strong infusion of mysticism, presents itself in the writings of Blaise Pascal, whose "Thoughts" will be read as long as reflection and piety continue to go hand in hand through the world.<sup>1</sup> Few writings of a tendency to depreciate the validity of the human reason can be found, which contain so little that is objectionable, and (with the exception of a degree of unhealthy and morbid melancholy) so much that is valuable and instructive, as these. Pascal's scepticism is all aimed against the *abuses* of philosophy, which appeared to him of so grave a nature, as to wring from him the taunt, which he seemed to adopt almost as a principle, "*Se moquer de la philosophie c'est vraiment philosopher.*"<sup>2</sup> His early life had been devoted to the eager pursuit of mathematical studies; he had there accustomed his mind to look for demonstrative evidence as being alone satisfactory; and when, by some striking events in his life, he was aroused from his absorption in these studies to contemplate the great problems of human existence and destiny, he became manifestly dejected by the discovery, that demonstration must

<sup>1</sup> It is fortunate for the student of Pascal that a new edition of his "Thoughts," unmutilated by ignorant editors, has just been published under the careful superintendence of M. Faugère.

<sup>2</sup> *Pensées*, Art. x. 36.

on these questions be altogether dispensed with. He required of philosophy that it should answer all the deep inquiries of the longing spirit with the same decisive voice that he had been accustomed to listen to in the department of the pure sciences ; and when he found the voice to come tremblingly and half inaudibly from the inmost soul, he began impatiently to distrust that reason, which failed in giving satisfaction to his hopes and expectations, and to seek a substitute for it in revelation.

The first position which strikes us on reading the "Pensées," is that which asserts the natural feebleness and the many delusions of the human mind. These delusions arise primarily from the inward clashing of the faculties occasioned by sin. "Les deux principes de vérité, la raison et le sens, outre qu'ils manquent souvent de sincérité, s'abusent réciproquement l'un l'autre. Les sens abusent la raison par de fausses apparences ; et cette même piperie, qu'ils lui apportent, ils la reçoivent d'elle à leur tour : elle s'en revanche. Les passions de l'âme troublent les sens, et leur font des impressions fâcheuses ; ils mentent et se trompent à l'envi." Similar sentiments to these occur throughout Part I. Art. 4, 5, 6, 11, and Part II. Art. 1, 6. Another cause of delusion upon which great stress is laid, is the partial view we are obliged to take of all things in relation to the universe at large. Because we cannot know *the whole*, it is urged that we can know *nothing* aright. "Nous sommes sur un milieu vaste, toujours incertains et flottants entre l'ignorance et la connaissance, et si nous pensons aller



plus avant, notre objet branle, et échappe à nos prises." Let it not be supposed, however, that Pascal rests satisfied in these sceptical results. Far from it. He felt that man *must believe* something, that it was impossible to repose upon doubt; and to save himself from the torture of uncertainty, he threw himself, or attempted to do so, into the arms of a faith, which, without satisfying the reason, could yet give repose to the spirit in its longing after the infinite and the eternal.<sup>1</sup>

Far, indeed, should we be from denouncing the appeal which Pascal makes, on purely religious questions, from the authority of reason to that of revelation, as altogether incorrect; for allowing, as we do, such a revelation to exist, an appeal of that nature is in perfect consistency with the best light of reason itself: but it was not necessary, when reason failed to satisfy his heart's yearnings after God and immortality, to undermine its authority on *all moral questions whatever*. In doing so, he doubtless repressed a too bold speculation within the region of theology, but at the same time he tacitly advocated principles, which, if carried out, would have gone far to strike at the root of the fairest portions of human knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

A similar, but far less profound scepticism than that of Pascal, manifested itself about the same time in Germany. Its importance, however, is not

<sup>1</sup> Part II. Art. 2, 6, 7.

<sup>2</sup> Mr Hallam, in treating of Pascal, has attempted to undermine the force of his remarks, by denying to human nature an "*intrinsic objective reality*." We cannot but think that on this point Pascal has

sufficient to detain us, in order to give any particular account of its advocates. One of the principal of these was Jerome Hirnhaim of Prague, the title of whose work, apparently, gives us almost as clear a conception of his philosophy as a perusal of the work itself. It runs as follows :—"De typho generis humani, sive de scientiarum humanarum inani et ventoso tumore, difficultate, labilitate, falsitate, jactantiâ, præsumptione, incommodis et periculis ; tractatus brevis, in quo etiam vera sapientia a falsâ discernitur, simplicitas mundo contempta extollitur, idiotis in solatium, doctis in cautelam conscriptus." Tennemann remarks of Hirnhaim, "that he declaimed, not without spirit, against the literary vanity and obscurity of the learned, on the ground that all knowledge was deceptive, and no axiom of reason known, that might not be annihilated by revelation. Divine revelation, supernatural grace, and an inward divine light, he thought, were the only foundations of certain knowledge."<sup>1</sup>

The other authors of this period who wrote in the same strain, were such as by no means to require even a mention in describing the historical progress of philosophy ; they consist chiefly of Catholic theologians, who attempted thus early to repress the rising spirit of Protestantism, by un-

the advantage over his commentator. Humanity is too closely knit together in the whole of its moral aspects, not to be sensible of perturbations, propagating themselves like waves of evil, through the whole mass.

<sup>1</sup> Tennemann's "Grundriss," sec. 342. As I have not been able to gain a personal knowledge of the work above quoted, I can only give the current opinion concerning it in the histories of philosophy.

dermining the authority of reason, to which it appealed.

Whilst the theologians of the age were thus engaged in repressing the bolder flights of the human reason, and advancing, in their zeal, sentiments detrimental to its just authority, another race of sceptical philosophers arose, who rested their arguments upon altogether a different foundation. The men to whom I now allude were educated in the sensational school of Gassendi; and accordingly, instead of invalidating the powers of the human reason in favour of religious faith, they took their start on the road to scepticism from those empirical principles, for which the remodelled Epicureanism of the Gassendist was remarkable. Samuel Sorbière and Simon Foucher both belong to this class, the former of whom published a translation of Sextus Empiricus, with notes and illustrations; while the latter revived the spirit of the new academy, and with its anti-dogmatical principles firmly opposed the views of Descartes and Malebranche.<sup>1</sup>

The general character of this school of philosophers was that of profound erudition, great knowledge of history, and a pleasing combination of wit and elegance; without any claim, however, to deep and patient metaphysical thinking. These qualities

<sup>1</sup> These writers were both pupils of François de la Mothe le Vayer. Foucher wrote a number of minor controversial works, which have little interest beyond their age. His chief opponent was Mersenne, who wrote his work entitled "*La Vérité des Sciences contre les Sceptiques*," chiefly against Foucher's tracts. These tracts were afterwards published together, under the title "*Dissertations sur la Recherche de la Vérité*," Paris, 1693. The best account I have seen of him is in the "*Dictionnaire des Sciences Philosophiques*," now publishing in Paris.

appeared, perhaps, in their highest degree, in the works of Peter Bayle, whom, accordingly, we may regard as the most perfect type of the philosophers of this class. The mind of Bayle was formed by nature to move in an orbit of its own, imbued, as he seemed, with an irrepressible desire of doing what no man else would do, of thinking what no man else would think, and of finding out, by the most profound research and unwearied diligence, every paradox that was discoverable in the opinions of others. Accustomed from his early youth to theological strife, and having himself two or three times crossed the boundary between Protestantism and Popery, he settled down into a fixed aversion to all dogmatism, both philosophical and theological, and spent nearly his whole life in exposing it by his learning, and satirising it by his wit. To assign to Bayle any deep metaphysical acumen, would undoubtedly be incorrect ; but few men ever possessed a more penetrating power of research into the opinions of other thinkers, and a greater talent in discovering their weak points.

This spirit of severe criticism, together with his fondness for the philosophy of Montaigne, naturally superinduced a tendency to examine every thing with a sceptical eye, and led him at length to deny the possibility of obtaining any positive philosophical knowledge, that should defy the assaults of sceptical ingenuity. That the human reason was sufficient to detect error, however latent, he firmly believed, and was himself one of the most illustrious

Engel a Silesian, and a few others, followed somewhat closely in his footsteps; the former of whom, especially, attempted to bring back some of the mystical notions of antiquity, in a work entitled "*Philosophia vetus Restituta*."

In France, Peter Poiret (born 1646, died 1719) advocated a mystical philosophy, which was less of a physical, and far more of a moral nature. Opposed, on the one hand, to Descartes, to whose philosophy he had for some time been attached, and on the other to the now growing opinions of Locke, against whom he wrote an able treatise,<sup>1</sup> he sought refuge from the weakness of the reason in *faith*, as the legitimate source of truth, and from the corruption of the will in *grace*, as the source of all true virtue. Theologically there are, perhaps, some things that may be considered valuable in the

forwards from Germany to England, and in converse with the mystics of both countries. He published his "*Paradoxical Discourses*" at London in 1685. His chief work, however, is entitled "*Seder Olam, ordo Sæculorum; hoc est historica enarratio doctrinæ philosophicæ per unum, in quo sunt omnia*," (1693). Tennemann says, "Er lehrte vornehmlich eine allgemeine Sympathie der Dinge; ein Uebergehen des Geistes und Körpers in einander; weil beide nur der Form, nicht dem Wesen nach verschieden sind; und sich wie weibliches, und männliches verhalten, und darum auch in jedem sichtbaren Geschöpfe vorhanden sind."—Grundriss, sec. 329.

<sup>1</sup> *Fides et ratio collatæ ac suo utraque loco redditæ adversus principia J. Lockii*, 1707. The great work of Poiret is entitled "*Economie de la Divine Providence*," (1649). The origin of Poiret's mysticism appears to have been his acquaintance with the writings of Mad. Bourignon. For a very interesting account of the French mysticism of this age, see "*Foreign Aids to Self-Intelligence*," a series of highly philosophical articles in the *Monthly Magazine*, by J. A. Heraud, Esq. On this subject, see No. 27, (March 1841).

proofs of his principle ; but so completely did he seem moulded to the work of criticism and controversy, that after having at one time pointed out the inconsistency of reason with revelation, and at another, the inconsistency of revelation with reason, he seemed to rest at last in the assurance that absolute truth is altogether undiscoverable, and that we must get as near to it as we can by criticising and correcting the aberrations of those who have sought it.

To get at the real opinions of Bayle, notwithstanding the voluminousness of his writings, is probably impossible. His habit of concealing the authorship of his works by false dates and other tricks equally dishonest, was but the counterpart of the concealment of his real opinions in those works themselves. The general tone, however, that pervades the whole of them, and which betrays the real mind of the writer more than his ostensible opinions, was that which I have indicated—a literary scepticism formed by the incessant habit of criticism upon the opinions of others, and by the utter instability of his own.<sup>1</sup>

Such then, in brief, were the principal forms which the sceptical philosophy of that age assumed. It first took its origin from the abuses of the other systems, and performed by no means a useless part,

<sup>1</sup> To give a complete account of the writings of Bayle, would be no very easy matter. It is questionable whether the authorship of all was ever acknowledged, or even known. That by which he is best known, and by which his name will survive the lapse of ages to come, is of course the "Dictionnaire Historique et Critique."

when, in correcting those abuses, it sent back some of the greatest minds of the day (Leibnitz to wit) to examine the very foundations of human knowledge, and to lay them over afresh with greater caution and solidity.

From this brief notice of the early scepticism of the Continent, we must now turn to the *mystical* elements which co-existed with it.

The close connexion between scepticism and mysticism has been already shown, and the incipient mystical tendency, as it appeared in some of the philosophers we have just mentioned, has been already detected. We have now, however, to detail the avowed and decided efforts which mysticism put forth to form philosophical systems, and to supply the place of that reason, whose authority was disowned by the sceptics. Such attempts made their appearance almost simultaneously in France and Germany, although in neither country did they produce systems of any superior eminence. Francis Mercurius Van Helmont (born 1619, died 1699), inherited from his father a strong bias to the mystical. Stimulated by the errors in which the other schools appeared involved, he was induced to make fresh attempts to combine the doctrines of Plato, of the Cabala, and of the Bible, into a new theory, the chief objects of which appeared to be, to refer both mind and matter to one and the same essence, and to reinstate the Pythagorean dogma of transmigration.<sup>1</sup> Marcus Marci of Kronland, Johann

<sup>1</sup> Helmont spent the greater part of his life in going backwards and

writings of Poiret; but the extension of his religious notions into the proper boundaries of speculative philosophy, to say nothing of his strong tendency to fanaticism, points him out to us as one of the most decided instances of mysticism in his age and country. Fénelon, who favoured that species of religious sentiment which France has designated by the term Quietism, may likewise be numbered among the mystics who arose at this period of French literature. The real tendency of the Quietist system is apt to be lost sight of in the lofty and imposing spiritualism which it professes. The peculiarity of it has always been the absorption of *the will* in passive feeling and ecstasy—a doctrine which may elevate a nature already pure, but which in many is too apt to degenerate into fearful immorality. Fénelon, however, like Poiret and others, is to be reckoned amongst the theological rather than the philosophical phenomena of his age and country.<sup>1</sup>

But the most wide-spread school of religious mysticism, which arose during the eighteenth century, was that of Emanuel Swedenborg. To give anything approaching to an *adequate* view of the Swedenborgian philosophy, we feel to be a matter of great difficulty, and, indeed, in a brief compass,

<sup>1</sup> Many glimpses into the real nature and tendency of Quietism are to be gained from a work, not in other respects very creditable to the author's taste—I mean Michelet's "Priests, Women, and Families." While the author is far from doing justice to the virtues of Madame Guyon, and of Fénelon himself, yet the character of the Quietist mysticism is often portrayed by his pen in a very striking manner.



almost impossible. The difficulty of the case arises partly from the amazing fertility of his writings, partly from the frequent obscurity with which his thoughts are expressed, and partly from the differences of opinion upon many important points, which exist amongst his followers. Although, according to his own testimony, he was accustomed from a child to think much upon spiritual things, yet his earlier manhood seemed to be altogether engrossed in scientific pursuits. The results of these studies exist to the present day in the form of volumes and tracts, which travel over almost the whole surface of natural history and science, and in which it is only justice to say are found, more or less obscurely, many of the germs of recent and brilliant discoveries.

It was in the "Prodomus," a brief treatise upon "The Infinite and the Soul," that the philosophical and theological thinking of Swedenborg began. I say philosophical *and* theological, because it was his firm conviction from the first, that revelation and philosophy were fundamentally identical, that all religion was to be made scientific, and all science to be made religious.

The first question which suggests itself with reference to the Swedenborgian philosophy, is this. What is the method it proposes, by which truth is to be attained? Some philosophers had attempted to *deduce* all truth from *a priori* principles; others had attempted to ascend by an *inductive* process from the particular to the general. What is the

methodology that Swedenborg adopted? To answer this question accurately, we should premise, that he set out upon no fixed metaphysical principles whatever; he went to work as a solitary and independent observer, to find truth; and the method to be pursued, formed itself as he proceeded. As any unphilosophical thinker naturally would do, he began his career by a wide observation of facts; his system, therefore, was cradled in simple inductive processes; it was analytic; or if we may use a word implying authority, it was Baconian. Few perhaps who have only listened to vague rumours respecting this philosophy, would imagine that it commenced in a collection of facts, far greater than those, of which the father of experimental science himself had any conception.

After passing successively through the regions of mechanics, with the corresponding properties of matter; after traversing the province of chemistry, throwing light upon the action of imponderable agents, and suggesting the germ of the atomic theory, by pointing out the geometrical relations existing between the ultimate atoms, Swedenborg comes at length to the animal kingdom. Here the course of his research begins to gain point and pregnancy. The human body may be regarded as that in which all the operations of nature are concentrated and perfected. Here, therefore, is a microcosm—a perfect representation of all being—an image of the whole creation; here consequently a theatre, upon which philosophy may achieve its noblest conquests. In this department, then, we begin to see more

clearly some of the scientific formulas or methods, which, evolved, as he tells us, by intense thought and patient observation, are potent to cast light upon the nature and uses of all things around us. First of all, there is the *doctrine of forms*. Nature, he considered, is purely mechanical in all her movements; hence every higher region in which she appears, from the mineral to the man, is represented by *movement in a particular form*. All the movements of the mineral kingdom are angular, as seen in the crystal; the next form is the circular, as seen in the bodily organisation, in the circulation of the blood, &c.; the highest form is the *spiral*, the type of *spirit* itself.<sup>1</sup>

In developing the physiology of the human body, another philosophical principle comes clearly into view, namely, the *doctrine of series*. Anxious to know the real structure of the various organs of the human frame, Swedenborg conceived that the doctrine of monads, and of ultimate atoms, would only bring him to a dark unintelligible *point*, in which all form or organisation ceased; and that the notion of the infinite divisibility of matter would lead to a nonentity, from which nothing could be drawn. Every organ, then, he conceived, must be made up of perfect atomistic organs, each one of which expresses the thing itself far more completely than the whole; just as society is made up of individual men, and each man is the most perfect pattern of humanity. Everything in nature, therefore, con-

<sup>1</sup> N.B.—There are other and higher forms enumerated, which refer to the spiritual world only.

sists of a series of perfectly organised atoms—the lungs, *e. g.* of innumerable microscopic lungs, the heart of numerous smallest hearts, and so forth with all the other organs.

Having gone through the regions of physiology, Swedenborg came to the confines of the province of Spirit itself. Often, he tells us, had he searched for some light upon the nature of the soul, but as often had been disappointed, until at length he got upon the right track, and entered the sacred chamber.<sup>1</sup> To gaze upon the soul by the senses was manifestly impossible; but was it not possible to reason up from the material to the immaterial, and from the facts of the one to see into the nature of the other? The validity of such a process was grounded upon the *doctrine of degrees*; a doctrine, he says, which is necessary “to enable us to follow in the steps of nature; since to attempt without it to approach and visit her in her sublime abode, would be to attempt to climb heaven by the Tower of Babel; for the highest step must be approached by the intermediate.”<sup>2</sup> The doctrine of decrees, accordingly, is that which teaches us, that there is a relation or parallelism between all things in nature, from the lowest sphere in which it exists, to the highest. Thus the brain contains *potentially* the whole body, and what is essentially true of the body, is true of

<sup>1</sup> See his “Economy of the Animal Kingdom,” chap. iii., on the Soul; at the commencement of which we have his own account of the method he had pursued.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. iii. sec. 210.

it. Again, the animal spirits which flow through the nerves, in a higher and more éthereal sphere, perfectly represent the more gross and obdurate human organisation ; so also the soul itself, in a still higher region, must be a perfect type, or rather co-ordinate archetype, of the body. Accordingly, all nature by these degrees ascends from the lowest to the highest, and descends from the highest to the lowest ; so that by the aid of this philosophical formula, we can study the spiritual world by means of the knowledge we possess of the material.<sup>1</sup>

Even in the spirit itself there are *degrees*. The lowest is that which is only cognisant of sensations ; the next above this is the *animus*, whose office is to imagine and desire ; thirdly, there is the *mind*, which understands and wills ; and lastly, there is the *soul*, whose office is to represent the universe, and have intuition of ends.<sup>2</sup> Such is man, so far as the *form* of his being is concerned ; but where is the *life*, which is to animate him ? The body is dead matter, but it is vivified by the animal spirits and other imponderable agents ; these agents again are vivified by the *soul*—but whence the life of the soul ? *It is the love of God.*<sup>3</sup> God, according to Swedenborg, is *perfect man*. The essence and form of God are respectively perfect love and perfect wisdom ; the former is represented in the human will, the latter in the human understanding.

<sup>1</sup> This is an application of the doctrine of Correspondences.

<sup>2</sup> Economy of Animal Kingdom, chap. iii. sec. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Angelic Wisdom, part i.

Having thus traced the philosophy of Swedenborg to its highest point, we may look back for a moment upon his whole method of procedure. Evidently it is the inductive and synthetic method combined. Commencing by observation, his mind seized upon certain high philosophical axioms, and from them reasoned downwards to the nature and uses of particular objects. Perhaps it is the only attempt the world has seen (with exception of the unsuccessful effort of Comte) at rising upwards to purely philosophical ideas from positive and concrete facts.

Having attained thus to the highest region of philosophy, Swedenborg enters the world of *theological* truth. For gazing upon the spiritual world, he conceives we have purely spiritual senses, and a spiritual understanding. To most men the spiritual world is closed, because, absorbed in the lower or sensual life, they have no intuition of it. To many, moreover, who *do* obtain spiritual intuitions, there exists not an enlightened spiritual understanding to *interpret* what the inward eye beholds. Spiritual or theological truth only becomes clear where both these requisites unite; where the purely moralised or unsensualised soul gazes upon the higher world, and where the spiritual understanding can comprehend what is seen.

Wrapt in his own deep reveries, Swedenborg could not resist the idea, that God, by a special act of his providence, had brought the scenery of the spiritual world, and the relations of spiritual truth, before his own mental vision, and within the sphere of his

intellection. With a mind fraught with long study upon nature and her works—with a soul habituated to deep meditation upon spiritual things—with a vivid imagination that could trace the analogies of higher truth in the dark windings of material forms—with a moral nature purified to virtue, and an exquisite sensibility of the whole system, he lost himself in the visions of his own inmost soul. Sometimes he seemed transported out of the body—then anon he would wake up to the world around him; sometimes he pursued his high imaginings, unconscious of the lapse of time; and then he wrote down that he had seen a vision of angels; and thus the high truth, that man, when his nature is elevated, can converse with the spiritual world through the medium of religious faith, became transformed into a special revelation, that was to usher in the purified Church, and the latter-day glory. Swedenborg was assuredly a great intellectual phenomenon. Seldom, perhaps never, have so many systems concentrated in a single mind. He began a simple observer—a Baconian analyst; from that he raised himself to the region of rational and ideal truth; and ended a mystic—the favoured channel of a new dispensation to mankind. In him, sensationalism, idealism, mysticism, were united—the only phase through which he never passed was that of scepticism. Had he been fortunate enough to complete the cycle, had a tinge of wholesome scepticism curbed his credulity, we might have had a great philosopher, and an active Christian reformer, unmarred by the

enthusiasm that dared to claim the title and the honours of a divine and apostolic messenger.<sup>1</sup>

These phenomena, then, which we have just enumerated, may be viewed as the various waves of scepticism and mysticism, which, having been first raised by the storms of controversy, in which the idealism of Descartes and the sensationalism of Gassendi were so long engaged, propagated themselves in different degrees of intensity for many years over several parts of the Continent of Europe. In the mean time the phases of idealistic and sensational philosophy themselves had altogether changed. The philosophy of Descartes had passed through the hands of Malebranche and Spinoza, had been remodelled by Leibnitz, and had come forth in a new dogmatic form under the auspices of Wolf. That of Gassendi, on the other hand, had given place to the more profound, and, at the same time, more popular sensationalism of Locke and his expounder Condillac; so that the effects of the old Cartesian controversy had hardly expended themselves, before the fresh struggles of these *re-modelled* systems were throwing in the seeds of a new scepticism and a new mysticism, which were

<sup>1</sup> One of the best expositions of the Swedenborgian philosophy is given in the "Foreign Aids to Self-reflection," by J. A. Herand, Esq. (Monthly Mag. No. 29.) The Swedenborgian Society is now in course of translating and publishing his works complete. The "Principia," the "Economy of the Animal Kingdom," with an admirable introduction by J. J. G. Wilkinson, Esq., and the "Animal Kingdom," have already appeared; others are forthcoming.



to bear their fruits during the greater part of the eighteenth century. This leads us to

(B.) THE SECOND PERIOD—ORIGINATING FROM LOCKE  
AND LEIBNITZ.

The scepticism and mysticism of the *eighteenth* century, to which we now advert, showed many points of diversity from that which preceded it. In France almost all traces of both gradually died away, for the whole mind of the country became now too much absorbed in the rising school of materialism, and its devotion to physical science, to give rise to much literature of a philosophical kind beyond these limits. Germany, on the contrary, in which the Leibnitzian-Wolfian philosophy was swaying a very feeble sceptre, gave a far better opportunity for the growth of sceptical principles, aided on, as they were, by the able and acute advocacy, which they had received in this country from the versatile pen of Hume. The court of Frederick the Great, who welcomed men of any opinions, so long as they had somewhat of the French taste and refinement about them, was surrounded by a multitude of *savans*, many of whom took a malignant pride in deprecating all the philosophical as well as religious notions of their day, in favour of a shallow and fashionable scepticism.

Among these the Marquis d'Argens figured as the author of a work, by no means deficient in erudition, entitled, "The Philosophy of Good Sense,"

the object of which was to throw doubts, not only upon the conclusions of logic and metaphysics, but upon those of history, and even natural philosophy and astronomy itself.<sup>1</sup> A still more direct attempt at philosophical scepticism was made by M. De Beausobre, who, in a work entitled "*Pyrrhonisme Raisonnable*," advocated a system but few removes from that of the philosopher whose name he adopted, and which contained many attacks upon almost all the dogmatical systems of philosophy, from Aristotle down to Wolf.<sup>2</sup> The same tendency was exhibited in Platner's "*Aphorisms*," a work of great metaphysical ability, which appeared first in 1776. Another edition of this work, considerably modified, was published after the appearance of the "*Critick of Pure Reason*," together with a "*Manual of Logic and Metaphysics*." In these works he attacked the conclusions of the Kantian philosophy, and attempted to overwhelm its positive results, by reproducing the old arguments of Pyrrhonism against the objective validity of human knowledge.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Marquis d'Argens was remarkable for the adventurous character of his life. He was brought up for a soldier; went in the embassy to Turkey; visited the principal parts of Africa; was wounded in Germany; and, being disinherited by his father, found a home in the court of Frederick. His writings are all marked with scepticism, more especially aimed against Christianity.

<sup>2</sup> Louis de Beausobre, the son of Isaac de Beausobre, was born in Berlin. His writings are not esteemed for great originality.

<sup>3</sup> Platner is perhaps better known by his "*Anthropology*" than his strictly metaphysical writings. No man of his day, probably, combined a greater knowledge of physiology and philosophy together.

Several other sceptical productions were put forth at that period, which, however, are but little known in this country, and which, even in Germany itself, have been long lost sight of, eclipsed by the brighter lights which have since arisen in their philosophical hemisphere.

These, we believe, were the most prominent *sceptical* writings which made their appearance during this age. As to mysticism—mysticism of a direct nature made but little fresh effort during the middle of the eighteenth century; the study of Swedenborg, perhaps, affording an indirect outlet for many notions of a mystical character, which might otherwise have presented some peculiar features of their own. It was, however, in the latter part of this century, that St Martin translated the works of Jacob Boehme, and originated the doctrine of religious mysticism in France, for which he is famous. Any one who wishes to understand the foundation upon which St Martin built most of his peculiar notions, has, in order to appreciate it aright, only to peruse the writings of Henry More, one of the Cambridge Platonists, and then imagine the principles there advocated reared up under the guidance of a versatile and enthusiastic spirit, as a barrier against the philosophical sensationalism of Condillac and the religious scepticism of Voltaire. St Martin was in many respects very similar to that mystical, but still admirable writer; and the opinions prevalent in France, when he gave utterance to his

thoughts, were such as to rouse his whole soul to action, in the attempt to place his own lofty spiritualism in direct opposition to them.

To give some idea of the method of philosophising, which is found in the writings of the "unknown philosopher," as he was often termed, I will give a single passage, translated from an article in the "Archives Littéraires," which appeared in 1804, just after his death, and quoted by M. Damiron, in which the spirit of his system is ably delineated. "The system of St Martin aims at explaining everything by means of *man*. Man is to him the key to every phenomenon, and the image of all truth. Taking, therefore, literally the famous oracle of Delphi, 'nosce te ipsum,' he maintains that, if we would fall into no mistakes respecting existence, and the harmony of all beings in the universe, we have only to understand *ourselves*, inasmuch as the body of man has a necessary relation to everything visible, and his spirit is the type of everything that is invisible. What we should study, then, are the physical faculties that depend upon our bodily organisation, the intellectual faculties, whose exercise is often influenced by the senses and exterior objects, and the moral faculties or the conscience, which supposes free will. It is in this study that we must seek for truth, and we shall find in ourselves all the necessary means of arriving at it: this it is which our author calls natural revelation. For example: The smallest attention, he says, suffices to assure us that we neither com-

municate nor form any idea without its being preceded by a picture or image of it, engendered by our understanding : in this way it is, that we originate the plan of a building, or any other work. Our creative faculty is vast, active, inexhaustible ; but in examining it closely, we see that it is only secondary, temporary, dependent ; that is to say, that it owes its origin to a creative faculty, which is superior, independent, and universal, of which ours is but a feeble copy. Man, therefore, is a type, which must have a prototype, and that prototype is God."

From this extract the reader may form some idea of the philosophical mysticism, by which St Martin attempted to supplant the shallow materialism and growing infidelity of his age, and to induce his countrymen to take a deeper insight into the constitution of the human mind, and its close connexion with the Divine.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Marquis Louis Claude de St Martin, called the Unknown Philosopher, was born at Amboise 1748, and died 1803. His life was one of great literary activity, and his writings are all marked by a lofty but somewhat mystical spiritualism. His two principal works are, "*Erreurs de la Vérité, ou les Hommes rappelés au Principe universel de la Science*," (1775), and "*De l'Esprit des Choses, ou Coup-d'Œil Philosophique sur la nature des êtres, et sur l'objet de leur existence* :—Ouvrage dans lequel on considère l'Homme, comme étant le mot de toutes les énigmes." (2 vols. 8vo. 1800.)

(C.) THIRD PERIOD—ORIGINATING WITH KANT AND  
CONDILLAC.

The writings of Kant and Condillac formed a new era in the progress both of sensationalism and of idealism. As their respective systems became propagated, the minor efforts of the philosophical spirit—its sceptical as well as its mystical tendencies—gradually disappeared. The former expired under the gigantic power of the one, the latter was dissipated by the clear and lucid analysis of the other. France and Germany now seemed to be equally divided between the material school of Paris, and the idealistic school of Königsberg; and in our present sketch we have to pause for a time, silent spectators of this conflict, until we see scepticism and mysticism again appearing between the combatants, anew to chastise their too great temerity, and anew to send them back to a closer examination of the fundamental principles upon which they were respectively building. Accordingly, ere the century comes to a close, we see the indications of a new system, both of sceptical and mystical philosophy, emanating from the Kantian metaphysics; the former brought forward by Schulze, the latter by Jacobi. As both of these writers, however, though belonging actually to the eighteenth century, yet pertain, as far as their influence goes, more closely to the nineteenth, we shall hereafter take them up as an introduction to the sceptical and mystical philo-

sophy of Germany during the present age. We now come back to our own country.

SECT. II.—*Scepticism and Mysticism in England, from the time of Bacon to the commencement of the nineteenth century.*

A struggle, similar to that which we have described between the Cartesians and Gassendists in France, was carried on at the very same period in England between the disciples and the opponents of Hobbism. The idealistic tendency, however, was far less extravagant in our own country than it became on the Continent, in the hands of Malebranche and Spinoza ; and the scepticism which arose from its paradoxes was proportionably of a less sweeping character. The author, who in England most perfectly expressed the sceptical tendency of this age, was Joseph Glanville, court-preacher to King Charles the Second, whose work, entitled “*Scepsis Scientifica, or Confessed Ignorance the Way to Science, in an Essay of the Vanity of dogmatising and confident Opinion,*” was intended rather to controvert the pretensions of the Aristotelian and the Cartesian philosophy, than to involve the whole circumference of human knowledge in darkness and uncertainty.

Strictly speaking, therefore, Glanville, although he appropriates the term *Scepsis* as significant of his philosophical opinions, was far from being a

universal sceptic. His object was to inculcate modesty, to chastise dogmatism, to teach the mind of man to be contented with the unostentatious medium between the bold materialism of Hobbes, and the assumptions of rationalism. With this end in view he attacked the authority of antiquity, of the schools, and of the more modern systems of philosophy, with a vigour which, though wanting in profundity, yet at least had the credit of being lucid and eloquent.<sup>1</sup>

The most remarkable portions of the work above referred to are the observations it contains upon causation, in which Glanville very clearly gives the germ of the theory, which was afterwards more fully developed by Hume. Causes, he argues, are the alphabet of science, without which it is impossible for us to understand any part of nature aright. But causes lie altogether beyond the reach of experience, which reveals to us nothing but phenomena; and, consequently, as experience is the only true source of human knowledge, it follows that the knowledge which men have pretended to reach of scientific and abstract truth, cannot be anything better than hypothesis.<sup>2</sup> This reasoning, though not very profound, is yet remarkable as a display of the systematic scepticism, which was then at

<sup>1</sup> The "*Scepsis Scientifica*" was in fact an amended edition of a former work entitled "*The Vanity of Dogmatising*," the former being published in 1661, the latter in 1665. Mr Hallam expresses his opinion, that few books are more deserving of being reprinted than the "*Scepsis Scientifica*."

<sup>2</sup> See "*Scepsis Scientifica*," p. 142.



work within a narrow circle, and as being a kind of preparation for the deeper and more comprehensive views, which were soon after propounded by the Scottish sceptical philosopher who succeeded him.

Mysticism, on the other hand, was favoured at this time with a far greater share of attention, and was supported by far greater learning, than were the feeble efforts of incipient scepticism. The way to this was, perhaps, already paved by the efforts of Robert Fludd (born 1574, died 1637) to revive the fanatical doctrines of Paracelsus; but the more direct cause is to be found in the fact that many lofty minds, disgusted with Hobbism on the one hand, and unsatisfied with Cartesianism on the other, took refuge in the sublime philosophy of Plato, and devoted themselves with severe and ardent study to the elucidation of his writings. Cudworth, whom we have already classed amongst those who manifested a tendency to idealism, was one of these Platonic philosophers, and not unfrequently mingled up with his more strictly rationalistic views, notions which bear upon their features somewhat of a mystical character. But in Henry More, his friend and companion (born 1614, died 1687), we see exemplified the whole process both of scepticism and mysticism through which the human mind is often led, after being compelled to distrust the conclusions of the current philosophy.

More was educated, according to the custom of the age, in the scholastic doctrines; but, being

driven from these through the increasing influence of the writings of Lord Bacon and his successors, he became a most zealous Cartesian, and even corresponded with Descartes himself on some questions relating to his philosophy. Finding, however, no certainty from these principles, and seeing with great penetration the paradoxes in which he would be involved by carrying them out to their just inferences, he plunged so deeply into scepticism, that he at length began even to doubt the proof of his own individuality. Not yet, however, was the yearning after truth altogether repressed by the spirit of unbelief; for we find him soon after buried in the deep mines of Platonism, and hear him after a while declaring, according to the Platonic doctrine, that true and perfect knowledge, which alone renders us happy, can only be found in that mental purity and spiritual enlightenment, by which we are elevated to a union with the Divine mind itself.

More was deeply impressed with the belief, that the revelation which God had originally made to the Hebrew nation had been communicated through the Pythagorean books to Plato; and not only this, but that the Cabalistic philosophy as well, contained a system of truth couched under its metaphors and symbols, which was likewise to be traced to the same Divine origin. On this ground he sought to prove, that there is a unity of spirit pervading these various writings, and that the whole sum of true philosophy had its germ in the illumi-

nation which man originally received from the supernatural communication made to him by God. The love which More manifested to the most ethereal portions of Platonism, his warm defence of the Cabala, his peculiar theological tenets, besides many of his poems, all clearly indicated his decided leaning to mysticism. These collateral views, however, might have been passed by almost unnoticed, or regarded simply as the poetic excursions of a lofty soul towards the elevated regions of spiritualism. But in addition to all this, there is in his philosophy a calm and dispassionate maintaining of the very same doctrines. It is when we find him asserting, on the one hand, that the *organ* of true knowledge in man is a direct and divine intuition; and, on the other hand, that the original and only source of truth objectively considered is an immediate revelation from God, that we become most sensible how deeply he had drunk into the spirit of philosophical as well as of religious mysticism.

Theophilus Gale; a Presbyterian clergyman, contemporary with More, followed in the same direction, although by no means to so great a length. He regarded the Bible alone as the source of true philosophy, and traced all the real knowledge that different heathen nations possessed to its pages, as the fountain from which the whole had originally sprung. There are two works in which Gale developed his views on these subjects. In the first of them, that entitled "The Court of the Gentiles," (1676,) he endeavours to trace all the notions of

antiquity which deserve any consideration, whether upon theology or philosophy, up to the Scriptures; or at least to Jewish originals; and even goes so far as to show that the very words they employed were taken from this inspired source. His second work, called "*Philosophia Universalis*," follows up the argument in two parts. In the first he treats of the history of philosophy, more especially that of Plato, to which he was strongly attached: in the second he expounds his own theory on the origin of our knowledge, attributing the whole to an inspired source, as being the only theory upon which its very existence could be explained.

The most open and avowed mysticism, however, of this period, was that of John Pordage (born 1625, died 1698), who spread abroad much the same doctrines in England as Peter Poiret was at the same time engaged in diffusing throughout France. The philosophy of Pordage was founded upon the writings of Jacob Boehme, whose notions he attempted first to systematisè and arrange, and then to vindicate by an appeal to revelation. The general character of his system may be seen by the title of one of his chief works, which runs as follows:—"Theologia Mystica sive arcana mysticaque doctrina de invisibilibus æternis, &c., non rationali arte, sed cognitione intuitivâ descripta." With this title alone, we apprehend, our readers will be quite satisfied; and therefore, having brought it for a moment to their view, we must leave it to those who are curious in tracing the

meanderings of the human spirit in its search after truth, to investigate more at length the principles upon which the doctrines advanced under it are founded, and to estimate the value of the results to which they may possibly lead.

The bald enumeration of the foregoing names may, perhaps, seem to require some apology. Our simple object in doing so has been to show, what phenomena of a mystical and sceptical tendency actually made their appearance at this time, without crowding our pages, and taxing the patience of our readers with the useless details of long-forgotten theories.

Here, then, the history of the English scepticism and mysticism, as they appeared successively during the seventeenth century, closes. The philosophy of Locke, which became popular to an almost unprecedented extent towards the close of this period, produced an influence upon the thinkers of the age, which turned the whole current of metaphysical speculation into a new channel. The mystic Platonism and the Cartesian rationalism which had prevailed so extensively throughout the country, were gradually forgotten, and all eyes seemed turned to Locke as the great oracle who was to solve all the doubts in which philosophy had been involved, and to probe with unerring accuracy all the powers and faculties of the human understanding.

The principles of Locke's celebrated Essay we have already criticised at some length, and shown,

we trust sufficiently, the dangerous readiness which it manifested, to regard experience as the sole basis, upon which any system of truth could be erected. To refute this, idealism, as we have also seen, raised a strong opposition; but whilst curbing the advancing sensationalism in its course, it did not stop in its own progress until it had, in the person of Berkeley, denied the very existence of the material world. The result of this contest was natural. To suppose that the extreme empirical principles, which flowed from the school of Locke, should exist on the one hand, and the perfected idealism of Berkeley should co-exist on the other, both leading to many strange and paradoxical results, without, at the same time, shaking the confidence of mankind in the power and authority of the human reason, and urging them on the road to scepticism, was, according to all the results of former experience, absolutely impossible. We naturally look, therefore, for an energetic display of scepticism, which should answer in some measure to the ability and acuteness, with which the other rival theories were supported; and if there be any truth in the supposition that the sceptical element is the check, which, by our very constitution, is intended to curb the rashness of a too hasty generalisation, our expectations could not, assuredly, in this instance, be disappointed.

The scepticism which arose out of the school of Locke, we find, in fact, to be one of the most deeply grounded in its principles, the most logical in its

arguments, and the most sweeping in its conclusions, of any which the history of philosophy has recorded ; and the name of David Hume, its great advocate, will ever be remembered as associated with all that is bold and comprehensive in the attacks, which have been made against the validity of human knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

Hume united in himself, to a high degree, the observing power of sensationalism, with the faculty of abstract reasoning that has generally belonged peculiarly to idealism, and knew perfectly what had been found unsatisfactory in the one system, as well as what was inconclusive in the other. He came, properly speaking, from the school of Locke, and adopted throughout, the fundamental axioms of that philosophy for his own ; but he could equally well employ a more abstract method of reasoning, whenever it suited his purpose, in order to strengthen the grounds of his startling unbelief.

To the first principles, from which he took his start, no one at that time could very strongly demur. It was then generally admitted that Locke's account of the origin of our ideas was correct, and that the whole of our knowledge might really be traced to sensation or reflection as its primary source. Hume, in fact, did little more than change the current phraseology, when he said that all our mental

<sup>1</sup> Hume was born at Edinburgh, April 26th, 1711, and died in 1776. A full and highly interesting life of Hume, with much new information from his manuscripts, has recently appeared, by J. H. Burton, Esq.

phenomena consist of *impressions* and *ideas*; including under the former our direct perceptions, and by the latter meaning the *signs* of them, which, by virtue of memory, association, &c., remain after the impression has ceased.<sup>1</sup> In addition to this, he was only following Aristotle, the scholastic philosophers, Descartes, Malebranche, and Locke himself, when he assumed as indisputable the representationalist theory of human knowledge, and took for granted, that by the *idea* of any real outward existence, we are to understand the representation or copy of it actually existing within our own minds; this copy being the sole means by which we can attain to the knowledge of the objective.<sup>2</sup>

Now, these two fundamental principles, that of the representationalist theory of human knowledge, and that of the sensational origin of our ideas, form the basis, and contain the prolific germs of all the astounding scepticism, for which Hume became celebrated throughout Europe. The first of these principles Bishop Berkeley had already employed, in order to undermine the evidence of the external world; and Hume clearly saw that all the arguments which Descartes or others had used to prove the existence of matter, completely failed before the

<sup>1</sup> Our references for Hume will be all taken from the "Enquiry into the Human Understanding," as it stands in the second vol. of his Essays. His Treatise on Human Nature, he himself wished to be cancelled, and always pointed to the "Enquiry," as containing his matured views. For Hume's theory of the origin of our ideas, see "Enquiry," sec. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Hume does not *maintain* the ideal system; he merely assumes it tacitly, as a truth which no one would question.



more close and consecutive reasoning of that prelate. But, not content with the idealism thus originated, he went on to show that Berkeley, although perfectly correct as far as he had ventured to proceed in his argument, had not carried it out to its legitimate extent; that he ought to have applied his principles to the subjective as well as the objective world; and that, as impressions and ideas express *everything of which we are conscious* (the whole mass of our knowledge being reducible to these two heads), we have no right to conclude upon the real existence of a *substance* called mind, any more than of that which is termed matter.<sup>1</sup>

It was against the representationalist theory, as being the foundation of these sceptical conclusions, that Reid directed the chief points of his controversy; and it was upon the successful refutation of it that he claimed his chief originality as a metaphysician. For our estimate of this controversy, therefore, we must refer our readers back to the last chapter, in which we have shown how far Reid appears to have merited the honour that he laid claim to, and pointed out in what manner the arguments of scepticism upon this head may be satisfactorily repelled. One additional remark only we would make, namely, that Hume deserves our thanks, not indeed for the intrinsic value of his opinions, but for the bold and lucid manner in which he brought the philosophy of his age to a great crisis. It was this crisis which proximately caused

<sup>1</sup> For Hume's statement of the argument of scepticism, see "Enquiry," sec. 12.

the overthrow of representationalism, as a theory of human knowledge, and gave rise to the renewed attempts which were made towards the close of the eighteenth century, for strengthening the main pillars of human belief.

The most famous portions of Hume's scepticism, however, were the conclusions he drew from his empirical principles respecting the origin of our ideas. Every notion, according to these principles, which cannot show some impression, *i. e.* some direct sensation from which it proceeds, is altogether delusive, and must be rejected as worthless by the true experimental philosopher.<sup>1</sup> Amongst these merely imaginary notions, Hume places that of *power*, it being evident that we can learn from experience nothing more than the existence of certain changes, which take place under certain circumstances; and that there is no perceptive faculty in man, by which the link that connects any two given events can possibly be discovered.<sup>2</sup>

It was this argument that led Kant to undertake the "Critick of Pure Reason." "I freely own," remarks that great thinker, "that the suggestions of David Hume were what first, many years ago, roused me from my dogmatical slumbers, and gave to my inquiries quite a different direction in the field of speculative philosophy. \* \* \* I first inquired whether Hume's objection might not be a general one, and soon found that the idea of cause and effect is far from being the only one, by which

<sup>1</sup> "Enquiry," sec. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. sec. 7, part i.

the understanding *a priori* thinks of the connexion of things ; but rather that the science of metaphysics is altogether founded upon these connexions. I endeavoured to ascertain their number, and as I succeeded in this attempt, upon a single principle, I proceeded to the deduction of those general ideas which, I was now convinced, are not, as Hume apprehended, derived from experience, but arise out of the pure understanding. This deduction, which seemed impossible to my acute predecessor, and which nobody besides him had ever conceived—although every one makes use of these ideas without asking himself upon what their objective validity is founded—this deduction was, I say, the most difficult which could have been undertaken for the behoof of metaphysics. And what was still more embarrassing, metaphysics could not here offer me the smallest assistance, because that deduction ought first to establish the possibility of a system of metaphysics. As I had now succeeded in the explanation of Hume's problem not merely in a particular instance, but with a view to the whole power of pure reason, I could advance with sure, though tedious steps, to determine completely, and upon general principles, the compass of pure reason, together with what is the sphere of its exertion, and what are its limits ; which was all that was required for erecting a system of metaphysics upon a proper and solid foundation.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> M. Willich's translation, in his “Elements of the Critical Philosophy,” p. 13.

Let us look then a little more closely at the problem which aroused Kant from his slumbers, and test the solution of it which Hume proposed. All the objects of human enquiry, says Hume, are of two kinds ; relations of ideas, and matters of fact. The former (as for example, the relations of space and number in geometry and arithmetic), present no difficulty ; they are all discoverable simply by the operations of thought. In reasoning about matters of fact, however, the case is different ; here one fact is always accounted for by another, and imagined to stand in close relation with it ; as when the existence of human beings on an island, would be inferred, from seeing a house upon it.<sup>1</sup>

Every enquiry, then, on *matters of fact*, as Hume correctly shows, is based upon the notions of *cause* and *effect* ; the origin of which notions he discovers in experience, and entirely disowns the supposition that any idea of *power* or *adaptation* is connected with them. Here we conceive there is a double error ; for, first of all, *we have* the distinct idea of power (whether it be objectively valid or not), given in the perception of two phenomena succeeding each other ; neither can all the reasoning in the world dispossess us of it. And secondly, the notion of cause and effect cannot come from sensible experience, because the idea of *power*, which forms the very peculiarity in all those successions, that stand related as cause and

<sup>1</sup> See Enquiry, sec. 4, part 1.

effect, is one which lies altogether beyond the reach of the senses. It is not *experience* which tells us, when a man is murdered, that there must be a murderer; the law which refers such an effect to an *efficient* cause, lies deeper in our nature than this, and has about it a *necessity*, and a *universality*, which prior experience could never have strengthened, nor the want of it have prevented. A single act brings the law or judgment into operation as readily as a thousand. Reid and Kant both contested the empirical doctrine of Hume on this point. The former appealed to common sense, and made the law of causality one of our intellectual instincts; the latter argued that the idea of cause and effect is one of the *a priori* forms by which the human mind necessarily views the connexion of external things—a doctrine, which grounds Reid's instinct in a deeper principle or law of our inward nature.

Having concluded, then (incorrectly as we conceive) that all our notions of cause and effect, and the relations existing between objects, are referrible to experience, Hume proceeded to moot another and still deeper question, namely, upon what principle all the conclusions of experience are grounded.<sup>1</sup> Let it be admitted that we have observed certain phenomena to succeed each other invariably, *i. e.* to stand in the relation of cause and effect, on what ground can we affirm that the same sequences will

<sup>1</sup> Enquiry, sec. 4, pt. 2.

still occur for the future. There is a universal and an unfailing expectation among men, that the same antecedents, under similar circumstances, will be followed by the same consequents. Whence does this expectation arise? Does it arise from a course of reasoning grounded on experience, or from habit, or from the intuitive judgment we necessarily form, whenever we see an effect, that there must be some efficient cause or causes at work, which, under the same circumstances, will operate again in the same manner? Hume in discussing the first hypothesis, showed with great power of reasoning, that it is impossible, from the mere experience of the past, to *demonstrate* by a logical process the recurrence of any set of events for the future. To the future, experience cannot at all apply, so that every judgment we form respecting futurity from the past must in fact involve the very expectation itself, for which we are attempting to account. To suppose that expectation, therefore, to be a logical inference from experience, would be clearly reasoning in a vicious circle. It would be deducing the expectation from the inference, and the inference from the expectation.<sup>1</sup>

In this part of the controversy, Hume manifestly felt the strength of his position, and, we admit, used it to the very best advantage. Having refuted the theory of experience, therefore, he takes up, in

<sup>1</sup> Enquiry, sec. 4. part 2.

the next place, the doctrine so often maintained by the Idealist—that the invariable succession of phenomena is known to us as an intuitive or *a priori* truth. This doctrine, however, is disposed of by him with still greater ease and brevity. All intuitive truth is such that its contradiction would imply an absurdity; but there is no absurdity in supposing many phenomena not to stand in the relation of cause and effect which hitherto have done so; and consequently the expectation in question must have some other basis.<sup>1</sup> The only conclusion remaining was, that our belief in the uniformity of nature, *as a universal truth*, must arise from habit or custom, gradually formed and strengthened by the power of association.

To explain the existence of this habit he enters into an analysis of the laws of association, from which analysis he concludes that there are three, and only three, principles of connexion between our ideas—namely, resemblance, contiguity, and causality. Accordingly, our belief in the relation of cause and effect is discovered to be a case of association, which, from its extreme frequency of occurrence, at last produces the idea, that there is a real link of connexion between the two, and thus occasions our confidence in the uniform recurrence of natural phenomena to all futurity.<sup>2</sup>

Now, if this be true, it is evident, that the belief in question must arise solely from the *vividness* or the *strength* of our associations. But does this,

<sup>1</sup> Enquiry, sec. 4, part 2.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, sec. 5, part 2.

we ask, agree with the facts of our daily observation? Is there not a difference *in kind* as well as degree between a case of imagination, however vivid, and one of real belief? So evidently is this the fact, that we sometimes believe a thing, the impression of which is hardly clear and strong enough to be perceptible, while our most vivid conceptions of the imaginative kind altogether fall short of reality. Mere association can never produce belief, unless there is some other element in the evidence beside. Even Hume himself, with all his acuteness, wavers, hesitates, and stumbles in the prosecution of his theory, and in one place is even betrayed so far as to admit, that in the case of belief there must be *some* peculiarity in the manner in which the connected ideas are conceived, although he does not explain very distinctly what that peculiarity is.<sup>1</sup>

Again, the theory before us does not coincide with facts, when it states that our belief in the uniformity of nature's operations is formed and strengthened by the frequent recurrence of the association. If so, let any one produce a common instance, in which such belief has ever appeared feeble, or in which frequency of recurrence has made it a whit stronger than it was before. Any child, after the first

<sup>1</sup> "Let us then take in the whole compass of this doctrine, and allow that the sentiment of belief is nothing but a conception more intense and steady than what attends the mere fictions of the imagination, and that this *manner* of conception arises from a customary conjunction of the object with something present to the memory or senses." Sec. 5, part 2.



experiment, manifests his conviction in the regularity of the laws of nature, as strongly as the octogenarian after the experience of his whole life; so that if the belief be of the gradual formation here described, it must have been *all* produced during a period of infancy prior to that in which we could make any observation upon it, or draw any conclusion to support the theory.

The theory which Reid maintained in opposition to this part of Hume's scepticism, (that, namely, in which he places our confidence in the stability of nature amongst man's instinctive beliefs,) was as complete as the philosophy of common sense could make it, and, we must admit, was well suited as a general statement to resist the progress of so irrational an incredulity among the mass of his readers. But perhaps the question might have been reduced to a more simple case of primitive judgment. All our primitive judgments, as we have seen in our analysis of Locke, are at first particular and concrete. The axiom, "things which are equal to the same are equal to one another," never suggests itself to a child's mind; and yet as soon as reason is developed enough to observe equality, that child shows that he can form the judgment, of which the above axiom is the general expression, in reference to any individual case that may come before him. In the same manner, when we first observe successive changes take place in nature, we form the judgment, that a parallelism of conditions indicates a parallelism of

results ; that the same powers ever exist to bring about the same phenomena under similar circumstances, or to put the judgment in another form, that the properties of similar things are themselves similar.<sup>1</sup> But it is evident, that in this judgment there is something complex still, for it is not yet defined what we mean by the *properties* of things, or what we really do when we judge of their similarity. Properties of bodies, when analysed, turn out to be simply another expression for the *powers* of bodies ; and as we only know bodies through their properties, it follows that we can only know them as *existing powers*. Thus philosophy, in the same manner as mechanics, while it asserts the real objective existence of matter, yet regards it not as a dead inactive substratum, but as a combination of forces acting variously under given circumstances, and in given directions.<sup>2</sup>

Again, to go a step further, if we were asked whence we get the notion of power, (which we now see to be implied in that of substance,) I answer that we get it from the consciousness of our inward activity—from the will—or, what is the same thing, from *the me*—the real starting point, though not the sole element, of all our knowledge. Thus, then, we have traced the principle of our belief in the

<sup>1</sup> See "Metaphysical Enquiry," by Isaac Preston Cory, Esq. p. 22 *et seq.*, in which many acute suggestions are thrown out upon Hume's problem.

<sup>2</sup> For a clearer view of the dynamical theory of matter, see our remarks upon Leibnitz, Maine de Biran, and Cousin.

uniformity of nature up to a distinct fact of our self-consciousness. To make this clearer, let us present the same steps again in the synthetic form. First of all, I am conscious of myself *as a power, a will, an activity*. Moreover, I am conscious that under certain circumstances my will *invariably* puts forth its power upon the world around. In all cases of resistance, for example, I am conscious of making a counter resistance, in order to maintain equilibrium. Gazing upon objects around, I see other powers on every side which operate upon me, and upon each other. Having witnessed the operation of any of these powers in one instance, I get the conviction, that just as my will invariably exerts itself in opposition to other forces invading it, so these powers out of me, having done so once in my own experience, will do so again—that this is, in short, *the law of their activity*. Now the powers around me are material objects, the expression of their activity we call their *properties*: and hence the law just deduced, translated from the language of dynamics into that of our ordinary materialism, takes the shape of the judgment we have already expressed; namely, that the properties of similar things are similar. It is, in fact, but an application of the dynamical axiom, that action and reaction are uniformly equal and opposite.

The only empirical explanation of this problem which has been recently given, proceeds upon the affirmation, that when we have observed certain phenomena to take place in connexion with certain

conditions, this observation forms a part and parcel of our experience, as far as it is acquainted with the things in question ; and that, as we cannot transcend our experience, we must necessarily imagine those things always to present the same phenomena for the future. “When we believe,” says Mr Lewes,<sup>1</sup> “that similar effects will follow whenever the same causes are in operation, we are simply *believing in our experience*, and nothing more. We cannot help believing in our experience—that is irresistible ; but in this belief, the idea of either past or future has nothing whatever to do ; it does not enter into the belief.” This reasoning, in fact, takes the whole thing for granted. It gratuitously strikes out all reference to past and future—the very points which form the whole peculiarity and difficulty of the problem—and then tacitly assumes, that our experience, which is and ever must be *past*, becomes absolutely valid for all futurity. Hume’s reasoning with reference to the theory of experience, all holds good against this explanation ; he saw clearly enough that our belief in a past fact could not become a *law of belief* for futurity, without something beside mere experience to account for it. But, it is urged, we cannot transcend our experience, and therefore we *must* conceive of the phenomena just as we have witnessed them. We affirm, in reply to this, that we *can* transcend our experience in all matters of

<sup>1</sup> Biographical History of Philosophy, vol. iv. p. 51.

a contingent nature; that we can easily imagine, without any contradiction, that fire will not ignite gunpowder, or that the sun will not rise to-morrow. The thing to be accounted for is—*why*, out of all the possibilities of the case, we should hold fast to the precise succession of events we have once witnessed, and feel convinced that it and no other will recur. Upon no ground can I see that this conviction is explained, except it be referred to a fixed principle of our nature; and that principle we have now grounded in a distinct fact of man's self-consciousness. I know by my own consciousness, that the power of my will resists all the aggression of other powers around me through the medium of the nervous system: in the same manner, having discovered other powers acting on the same principle of uniformity, whether in referenc to myself or each other, I now see the law of my own consciousness operating throughout nature. On this fact, then, is grounded our belief in nature's stability; for were nature to operate *differently*, the very law of forces which we have seen to be in operation, would be reversed.

Against this theory it is no objection to say, that the belief in question is so simple and immediate, that we cannot imagine all this inward process to take place before it is arrived at. It must be remembered, that all our faculties operate spontaneously, long before we become reflectively conscious of their operations; and that, however complicated the process may be, yet there is no reason why it

may not have taken place amongst the very first efforts of the infant reason. Of course we do not regard this or any of our primitive judgments, in the first instance, as an axiom of universal application; we first have the belief *in the particular*, and we gradually come to regard it more and more universally, until at length it appears before us in a full axiomatic form.

The more I reflect upon the whole problem that has just been considered, the more clear does it seem to my own mind, that the foundation principle of all inductive reasoning can be traced to a primitive fact of our consciousness, revealing the law of forces, whether in nature or in the soul. I would not, however, rest the validity of the great axiom of induction absolutely upon this psychological theory; for on whatever theory we may choose to account for it, still the fact remains the same, that the idea of change or of phenomenon necessarily involves and suggests that of a cause, a purpose, or a sufficient reason, and that this is accompanied with a full conviction of the stability of nature's operations. Against these conclusions, with all their theological consequences, it is in vain for scepticism to level its shafts.

The philosophy of Hume, as a whole, originated and fell with himself. A more partial and less daring scepticism might, probably, have gained many followers; but it is the inevitable result of every system, professing universal unbelief, to destroy itself. The man who by any process of reason-

ing involves every portion of human knowledge in doubt, instead of persuading any one to follow his conclusions, does little more than controvert his own principles by a "reductio ad absurdum." The real effect is not to make us doubt the validity of our knowledge, but to shake our confidence in the philosophical, or rather unphilosophical axioms, by means of which such results could be obtained. "Universal scepticism," says Sir James Mackintosh, "involves a contradiction in terms. It is a belief that there can be no belief. It is an attempt of the mind to act without its structure, and by other laws than those to which its nature has subjected its operations. To reason without assenting to the principles on which reasoning is founded, is not unlike an effort to feel without nerves or to move without muscles. No man can be allowed to be an opponent in reasoning who does not set out with admitting all the principles, without the admission of which it is impossible to reason. It is, indeed, a puerile, nay, in the eye of wisdom, a childish play, to attempt either to establish or confute principles by argument, which every step of that argument must presuppose. The only difference between the two cases is, that he who tries to prove them, can do so only by taking them for granted; and that he who attempts to impugn them, falls at the very first step into a contradiction, from which he never can rise."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See "Dissertation on the Progress of Ethical Science." Art. Hume.

Of the English *mysticism*, to which the last century gave rise, we can give but little account, inasmuch as it flowed more into the channel of religious than of philosophical speculation. The school of Swedenborg made some advancement in our own country, as it did in other parts of Europe, and numbered a few cultivated minds amongst its supporters. But the middle of the seventeenth century was the period in which the community began to be aroused from its religious lethargy to a new life and energy; and whatever tendency there might have been to seek for truth in the deeper feelings of our spiritual nature, it all flowed into the stream of religious excitement, which then became so much broader and deeper than it had been for ages before. The belief in Divine influence strongly characterised that movement, and the habit of looking within and reading the heart's religious experience was constantly encouraged; so that an element was at work, more or less, throughout the whole of society, that necessarily took the place of those inward impulses, which, if not placed under the guidance of Christianity, would, in all human probability, have developed themselves in the rise of philosophical mysticism.

Here, then, we close what is more directly the historical portion of our subject. We have traced the progress of sensationalism and idealism up to the age in which we live, and seen the different forms of scepticism and mysticism to which their



mutual contests have given rise. Our next, and still more important task will be, to exhibit in its various movements the advancement which the human reason has made during that half of the nineteenth century, which has now arrived almost at its termination.

## PART II.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

#### PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

BEFORE we proceed onwards with our history, and bring it over the threshold of the present century, we must make a brief pause, in order to take a compendious view of the ground we have now hastily travelled over, and to collect together the results, which may have been gathered up on the way. Looking at the philosophy of modern times in connexion with that which for almost two thousand years had preceded it, we see it bearing the marks of an *independence* which, since the days of Plato and Aristotle, had been altogether unknown. The scholastic ages in particular were marked by a well-nigh slavish deference to authority, an authority which was balanced with some degree of equality between Aristotle on the one hand, and the Pope on the other. Philosophy during this period was content, not only to be held in leading-strings, but to be nurtured and instructed by dogmatic theology,

as an obedient child by its parent or guardian. It was, at present, timid in all its movements, feeble in its efforts, and felt so much the need of extraneous support, that it willingly allowed, and even sanctioned, an appeal to those masters, who, the one in the ancient the other in the modern world, had succeeded in gaining the confidence, and then in subduing the reason of mankind.

The Reformation was a revolt against authority; it presented the spectacle of the human reason once more asserting its independence, and indignantly bursting the chains by which it had so long been bound; for whether we regard the movements which then took place in the religious, the political, or the philosophical world, they are all alike characterised by the same determination to shake off the trammels of servitude, to which the will of humanity had during many past ages submitted. It was the sixteenth century which witnessed the main heat of the battle of reform; then it was that events which had long been brooding over society came to their crisis; then that authorities which had before been only doubted were openly disavowed; then that the first overthrow of intellectual and spiritual despotism was both given and received.

The *seventeenth* century presented another new page in the history of mankind. The arm of Bacon had given the first fatal stroke to the authority of Aristotle, and had stripped the laurels from the brows of the hitherto invincible heroes, who had

taught the trivium and quadrivium of human learning ; but it was not in the power of any one man to tear up all the ramifications into which the roots of the middle-age philosophy had extended themselves, and to reap even the first-fruits of the principles he might succeed in establishing. This was, in fact, the mission which the whole of the seventeenth century had to perform. Accordingly, as in the department of politics, it was chiefly occupied in shifting the old and worn-out institutions of the dark ages ; as in the department of religion, it was employed in defining the power and authority which in matters of faith the individual mind ought to possess, and of which it had been unrighteously plundered ; so also the main efforts of philosophy, during that century, were expended in clearing away the rubbish, which scholasticism had heaped up in the path of its successful advancement. So diligently was this object pursued by the Hobbists on the one side, and the Cartesians on the other, that before the century came to its close the worthless material of the old and crumbled edifice of the scholastics had well-nigh vanished, and the foundations were already laid for a new species of philosophy, grounded not upon the syllogism, but upon the *analysis of thought*. As a proof of this, be it remembered, that it was during the seventeenth century that Locke furnished the principles of the modern sensationalism, and Leibnitz the data which afterwards expanded into all the phenomena of the German idealism. We may say, then, in few words,

that the sixteenth century pulled down the scholastic edifice, leaving it a mass of ruins; and that the seventeenth cleared the ground, and laid the foundations for our modern philosophy.

We now see the *eighteenth* century ushered in under the most favourable auspices, and wait accordingly to inquire what was the office *it* had to perform in the development of philosophical truth. That office, in brief, was not to pull down but to rear up. The new foundations being already laid, the new systems sketched out, it had to test the data upon which they proceeded, to expand and mature their results, and, lastly, to show their bearing upon all the various departments of human knowledge. One thing especially was achieved by this age, towards the independence of the human mind; and that was the withdrawal of philosophy from the authority of revelation, and the due assignment to each of their respective limits. Bacon and Descartes, although they were the first great abettors of the spirit of independence, yet never got beyond the influence of their theological system, or dared to assert for the child they had reared a complete freedom from all dogmatic restraint. Locke and Leibnitz certainly evinced a far greater philosophical purity, both in the method they pursued and the fundamental principles they asserted, but it was not until the eighteenth century had brought those principles to their maturity, that the authority of revelation in the department of philosophy was altogether overcome, and each was

left to perform its own part, and cast its own portion of light upon mankind.

The eighteenth century, in thus placing philosophical reasoning upon its true footing, succeeded in exhibiting both the excellencies and the defects of the various systems which the renewed energy of the human mind had originated. The service rendered thereby to the advancement of human knowledge was of the greatest importance. The state of philosophy previous to this trial which it underwent had been any thing but satisfactory; many of the prevailing systems gave such a practical exhibition of weakness and insufficiency, that they threatened to involve society at large in the coldness and despair of universal scepticism. All this, however, was only preparing the way for the critical philosophy of the Kantian school, and in so doing contributed not a little to bring metaphysical speculation into a more advanced state. The writings of Kant, therefore, may be viewed as the flower of the philosophy of their age, forming in truth the boundary line between the metaphysics of the last and those of the present century. Such we may regard as an abstract of the advancement of philosophy from its revival down to the opening of the century, in which we are now living.

It is not enough, however, for us here simply to take this superficial view of the progress of speculative science during the two last eventful centuries; we need to look more closely into the *nature* of the speculations, with which they were filled, and to see

in what manner they attempted to solve the great problems about which philosophy is conversant.

All intellectual philosophy of a fundamental character turns upon the two poles of *thought* and *existence*. Thought represents the subject, existence the object; and the whole problem of philosophy is to analyse the phenomena of the former, and then to determine what they unfold to us respecting the latter. There is a world of thought within us—there is a world of existence about us; what then is the exact relation which the one of these poles of philosophy holds to the other? Are thought and existence *eternally* opposed, or is there any point in which they perfectly coincide? Can thought ever be shown to be an attribute of being, or can we trace existence up to that degree of sublimation where its very essence seems to be *Thought* itself? Here, then, are the two data of all speculation—a subject and an object—consciousness with its phenomena, and being with its essential attributes—a self, and a not self. All philosophy works upon these materials, tries to understand them, to unfold their relations, if possible, to trace them to the point where they originate and where they unite. Such a point, it is true, we may not be destined by scientific deduction ever to reach; but still it is to the clearer development of this problem that the tide of human speculation must ever perpetually roll forward. Chemical analysis may never discover the ultimate unity of matter—physiology may never arrive at the vital principle; still to these points

they are ever struggling to attain. In the same manner, speculative philosophy aims at deducing *the one great principle of the universe*, and the nearer it gets to it the more perfect does it become.

Let us look at the history of this problem in modern times. The middle ages pursued the investigation of it in their own peculiar manner. All the speculation of the scholastic philosophers, it is well known, clustered around two centres—first, the ideal system of Aristotle, which was no other than an attempt to show the relations of thought and existence with regard to our sense-perceptions; and, secondly, the controversy of the nominalists and the realists, which was simply to determine the point whether the real essence of external things is given in the impression they make upon us through the senses, or in the general idea we form of them by the reason. In both cases, therefore, the problem was to solve the mutual relations which thought and existence hold to each other.

This question, then, we may consider, was handed over undetermined to the speculators of more modern times; and the different methods of viewing it give us the key to the two opposed systems of philosophising, with which our modern history is acquainted. The one system starts with this problem—Given, the real phenomena of existence, to deduce from thence the nature and varieties of our thoughts and ideas. The other reverses the question, and puts it in this manner—Given, the phenomena of our own minds, to deduce from thence the reality



and the nature of the world without. The one commences with the objective, and deduces from it the subjective; the other starting from the subjective, seeks to deduce the objective. If we take the simple product of sense as the starting-point, and from that construct the world of ideas, our philosophy is of the former kind, and must be entirely empirical; if we begin with our own mental conceptions, and from them construct the world without, our philosophy is of the latter kind, and must be, to a greater or less extent, rationalistic.

Hobbes and Gassendi,<sup>1</sup> followed up by Locke, took the empirical direction, and from the analysis of sensation attempted to account for the whole mass of our ideas. According to the two former,

<sup>1</sup> There has been much dispute as to the real opinions of Gassendi upon the question of Materialism. That he was not a very firm materialist is evident from the circumstance that his views on the point have been so much contested. At the same time there are some of his works in which the truth of the materialist hypothesis is maintained too clearly to be misunderstood. In his "*Disquisitio Metaphysica*," written in opposition to Descartes, the sensational tendency of his philosophy is peculiarly manifest. "It remains to be proved," he says (vol. ii. p. 183), "that the faculty of thinking is so far removed above the corporal nature, that the animal spirits cannot receive such a character as to be rendered capable of thought." A little further on he says that we may conceive of mind "as a pure, clear, subtile substance, which spreads itself like a wind over the whole body." The same conclusion only can be drawn from his argument respecting the *idea of body* possessing extension (p. 273), and that likewise concerning the union of mind and body, where he says—"All union must be produced by the very close and intimate contact of the things united. But how could such a union take place *without body*?" The retort of Descartes is well known, who, to the satirical exclamation of Gassendi, "*O, anime!*" replied, "*O, caro!*"

man is entirely material, and all his mental phenomena consequently nought but corporal affections ; according to Locke, however, human thoughts are inward images (ideas) of outward things—sometimes simple representations as in perception, and at other times modified representations as in reflection ; so that the relation between the objective and subjective world is here perfectly determined, the latter being only a living picture of the former, and all truth consequently consisting in the inward representation, or idea, being perfectly correct. The sceptical results which Hume drew from this position were opposed on the part of the Scotch metaphysicians, by giving to certain fundamental principles of belief an independent subjective existence, by denying the doctrine of representative knowledge, and thus disturbing the fixed relation of causality, which Locke and others had instituted between the outer and the inner world. The successors of Locke, however, both in France and England, went resolutely forward in the direction that was pointed out for them, until they landed in pure materialism—a doctrine in which thought and existence are made identical, not by tracing both up to their common source, but by cancelling all that is peculiar to the former, by making the mind itself merely a piece of material organisation, and mental phenomena nothing but the motion of its particles. The climax of this school, therefore, was to solve the great problem of philosophy, by blotting out one of its terms, and to regard matter as the only absolute and self-

existent reality. Such was the result of the empirical theory ere the eighteenth century came to its close.

Descartes was the founder of the opposed or rationalistic method of philosophising. The relation between thought and existence was in his case expressed by the position "*Cogito ergo sum*," a sentence in which the reality of existence was made to flow as a direct inference from the phenomena of consciousness. Whether, therefore, thought can be identified with existence or not, yet this much at any rate is clear upon the Cartesian principle, that all our knowledge of the latter must be involved in our consciousness of the former, that all ontology has its roots in psychology. Spinoza, however, carrying out the fundamental principle of Cartesianism, asserted the *universal* identity of thought and existence, referring them both alike to the "*ens realissimum*," the one universal substance of which thinking and extension are only different *modi*. Hence the *rationale* of his assertion of the perfect parallelism between the inward processes of thought, and the outward processes of nature.

Leibnitz, perceiving that the pantheism of Spinoza must superinduce the most rigid fatalism, and ultimately tear up the roots of all morality and religion, introduced the element of *power* into all the individual existences, of which he supposed the universe to be composed, and by so doing changed the stern mathematical view of Spinoza into the more pliant and accommodating form of a dynami-

cal theory. If all things are modes of the Divine Being (Leibnitz contended), they must each and all contain the element of freedom, which is absolutely inherent in Deity, and consequently every atom or monad must comprehend the principle of its own self-development. What is a monad but a power, acting according to the laws impressed upon it by the Deity; and what is *thought* but the expression of that power, in the case of monads which have attained to the elevation of self-consciousness? His whole system of monadology may therefore be regarded as an answer to the inquiry of speculative philosophy, respecting the relations of thought and existence in the universe, constituting, in fact, one of the most ingenious methods ever devised for tracing them both up to one fundamental principle.

Wolf gave the principles of Leibnitz popularity and extension, by systematising and arranging them; but instead of expanding the fruitful germs of thought which that master-mind had thrown out, he elaborated carefully the *form* of his philosophy, and neglected the *essence*. Wolfism was, perhaps, the most complete attempt which was ever made to ground an entire system of rational philosophy upon the ordinary principles of logical reasoning; and if nominal definitions could give a perception of the real nature of the things defined, nothing more satisfactory and complete could be wished for, than the Encyclopædia of philosophy which he originated. It sought, however, to solve the problem of metaphysics simply by the analysis of our

processes of thought, and never succeeded in finding a valid passage from thence into the world of objective reality. Comparing, then, the views of Hartley and Priestley on the one hand, with those of Spinoza and Leibnitz on the other, we see that the great question of speculative philosophy was brought to a solution by the two opposed methods of philosophising, in two altogether different ways. By the materialists, it was solved by making thought synonymous with matter in some of its peculiar affections; by the idealists, on the other hand, by making matter homogeneous with thought, and accounting for the common principle of both, by means of a pantheistic doctrine, or a theory of monadology.

It was just at this point that Kant, seeing the errors which existed on both sides, came forward with his reform, and by a searching criticism of man's cognitive faculty, showed how impossible it was, by any process whatever, to arrive at a scientific knowledge of absolute existence at all. With regard to *material* existence, he proved that we can never go beyond phenomena, so that actual experience here marks the furthest limits of our knowledge. With regard to the pure conceptions which the reason strives to form respecting the essence of the soul, or the universe, or the Deity, he showed that these were all based upon fallacious conclusions; so that the main result of his Critick was to cut off the possibility of our ever coming (upon philosophical principles) to the point from whence

thought and being alike spring, and where they are both identical. Kantism, therefore, was the destruction of metaphysics, properly so called ; it removed the ground-problem beyond the reach of the human faculties, and sought to silence all ontological speculation for the future. Instead, however, of altogether denying the absolute in human knowledge, Kant admitted it in connexion with those subjective and regulative principles of the human mind, which, though wanting objective reality, yet may be regarded as absolute to man, so long as he retains his present mode of existence. The attempts of the rationalistic method, then, to solve the problem of philosophy, as far as the eighteenth century was concerned, ended in a well nigh completed system of subjective idealism. Whatever of absolute was admitted at all on scientific grounds, was confined to the human subjectivity ; and, therefore, if the paradox can be allowed, was regarded as a *relative absolute*. This conclusion of the Kantian metaphysics would have involved the whole philosophy of their illustrious author in the darkness of a most rigid scepticism, had their effects not been contravened by the authority of the practical reason.<sup>1</sup>

These different and unsuccessful attempts to

<sup>1</sup> This view of the problem of philosophy has been brought out with great clearness by the Hegelian school. Hegel, it is contended, has alone reached the climax. In him, subject and object, thought and existence, are absolutely one. Fichte founded a subjective idealism, in which the *me* was *the world-all*. Schelling created an objective idealism, in which thought appears only as one of the de-

fathom the depths of thought and existence, together with the contradictory conclusions which they gave rise to, necessitated the appearance of scepticism, which from time to time either laughed or reasoned down whatever was untenable in the different philosophies, to which it was chiefly opposed: and then mysticism, still grasping after truth, but distrusting the more rational methods of attaining it, strove to dictate, as from some inward oracle, the fundamentals of human knowledge, as belonging to a region too lofty for the wings of reason ever to reach.

These, therefore, are the four elements which were brought over from the preceding ages to the nineteenth century; and it is the history of their further progress, and of their various modifications as manifested within that portion of it which has already passed, to which we have now more especially to direct our attention. Whenever, therefore, we find the principle asserted, that truth is discoverable by the human faculties, but that it must all ultimately rest upon the experience of the senses as its foundation, we shall regard this as a manifestation of empirical or *sensational* philosophy. When, on the contrary, we discover attempts to unfold truth grounded upon the native powers of the reason, we shall attribute such attempts to the rationalistic method, or as we have termed it, to

velopments of nature. In Hegel's absolute idealism alone the two terms are retained, but their unity demonstrated. On this, see Michelet's "Geschichte der letzten Systeme," p. 12, *et seq.*

the philosophy which is characterised by the *idealistic* tendency. When, again, the power of discovering absolute truth is altogether disowned, we shall recognise in such disavowal the spirit of *scepticism*; and when, lastly, the capacity of man's natural faculties to attain it being denied, some other element within us is pointed out as supplying the deficiency both of reason and sense, whether that element be faith, feeling, or direct illumination, we shall refer such principles to the operation of *mysticism*.

Errors we shall have to point out in all the schools; but, notwithstanding these, we shall be quite sure to find some benefits conferred by each, so far as it has been a real and earnest striving after knowledge. Accordingly, after the analysis which each system has afforded of the materials that lie peculiarly within its own province, we shall only have to look for an eclectic philosophy, that will combine the results of the whole, and indicate the advancement which the nineteenth century has made in the development of metaphysical truth.



## CHAPTER IV.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF MODERN SENSATIONALISM.

HITHERTO we have followed pretty closely the historical order in sketching the various systems of philosophy, which appeared from the revival of the speculative spirit in Europe down to the commencement of the present century. In rendering a faithful account of the philosophy of our own age, it will not be possible to follow so completely as we have done the chronological flow of events, since by so doing we should prevent the possibility of giving a classification of the different schools grounded upon their proper philosophical characteristics. In France, it is true, and to a great extent in Germany, the development of speculative opinions has gone on with so regular a step, that the chronological and the philosophical orders in some measure coincide; in these cases, therefore, we are not obliged, even when observing the latter order, to depart very widely from the former. In England, however, we look in vain for any *progressive* school of metaphysics, that has been steadily advancing as the age has rolled round: we see nought but isolated efforts, many of which, indeed, are not wanting in some of the best

characteristics of philosophical thinking, but which have far too little connexion among themselves to form what we might term an independent school of philosophy. In describing these efforts, it will not be our object to collect all the works and name all the authors who have contributed to the metaphysical literature of the country during this century, since the multiplicity of shades which their opinions present, would only confuse the reader in his endeavour to make a correct estimate of our philosophy as a whole, and offer very little instruction in return; but we shall rather attempt to point out the main directions in which speculation has hitherto seemed to flow; and we shall do this by bringing forward simply the more prominent writers to whom such speculations are chiefly indebted.

#### SECT. I.—*Of Modern Sensationalism in England.*

In taking a broad view of the different shades of *sensational* philosophy as the present century has thrown them before us, it is somewhat difficult to find a mode of classification, by which we may include everything that bears upon it a scientific character. The best classification we have been able to make, proceeds upon the principle, that there are just three different directions which it is possible to take, and which different writers have followed, in erecting a system of empiricism. *First*, there are some who have pursued a purely metaphysical analysis, and attempted to show, in this

manner, that every notion springs from the senses as the original channels through which the whole material of thought has been supplied. *Secondly*, there are others, who, waiving this kind of abstruse analysis, have fixed their attention upon man's practical life, and furnished a whole system of ethical philosophy grounded on sensational principles. And, *thirdly*, there are others, who commence with a physiological investigation of the human frame, and from this seek to deduce the nature and the origin alike of all mental and moral phenomena. Those who take the first course, we shall term sensational metaphysicians; those who follow the second, sensational moralists; while the third class may be designated sensational physiologists.

#### (A.) SENSATIONAL METAPHYSICIANS.

In beginning with the consideration of the first of these classes, we are carried back at once to the writings of Locke, as the model upon which this kind of metaphysical analysis has for the most part been formed. We have already shown the process, by which *some* of the professed adherents of Locke's philosophy, both in England and France, strained his principles beyond their just limits into materialism itself. It is not to be supposed, however, that such has been the case with *all* the followers of this school. Several authors have appeared, who instead of hurrying forward into materialistic

conclusions, have determined to keep more closely in the path which was trodden by the master himself, and have contented themselves either with furnishing fresh proofs and illustrations of his main positions, or with showing more fully in what way our more purely rational notions can be deduced from the original intimations of sense. In England, indeed, Locke, in his own genuine character, has long been the great philosophical authority; and, although the phraseology of our metaphysical writers has more recently been much modified by the school of Reid and his Scottish followers, yet the acute analytic spirit, which is so observable in Locke's own writings, has in some striking instances been revived, and led to many new, though similar, speculations on the origin of our ideas. We must not forget to mention, however, the very observable effect of Hartley's observations respecting the laws of association upon all the writers of the Lockian school since his time; for, although in many instances no mention has been made of that acute writer, yet the important part, which is assigned by all to the phenomena of association, clearly shows us, how much is owing to the views upon this subject, which he was the first to promulgate.

Perhaps there is no English writer since Locke who has upon the whole theorised with so much ability on these topics, and analysed our mental processes upon sensational principles so acutely, as the late Mr James Mill, author of "An Analysis

of the Phenomena of the Human Mind," which appeared in the year 1829. We may regard this author, without doubt, as standing at the head of the sensational metaphysicians of the present day, and, consequently, may safely use his writings as the most complete existing representation of the partial success, which has more recently attended philosophical investigations of this nature. We cannot do better, therefore, under the present head, than first of all to give a brief sketch of Mr Mill's method of analysis, and then to point out in what respect, under the view of another and more spiritual system of philosophy, it may be regarded as unsatisfactory and incomplete. In accomplishing the former of these purposes, every facility is offered by the admirable order, brevity, and clearness, with which the whole work is pervaded, and which leaves hardly anything to be desired on the score of a philosophical style and arrangement. In accomplishing the latter, we shall attempt to use that impartiality, which is becoming, and, indeed, necessary to the attainment of truth in all philosophical discussions.

Our author having stated that the main object of the philosophy of the human mind is to expound the more complex phenomena it presents, commences by laying down its *simple states*. The first and foremost of these are, of course, *sensations*; respecting which little, if anything, new is said, except it be some very just remarks upon the sensational feelings which accompany the action of the

muscles, and those which arise from the alimentary canal.<sup>1</sup> Having finished this view of our sensations, he next comes to *ideas*, which he explains to be, copies or traces of sensations that remain after the sensations themselves cease.<sup>2</sup> Respecting the formation of these he offers no theory, but only states the fact as indisputable, that such traces do exist. These two classes of feeling, then, form, according to Mill, the *whole material* of our thoughts and emotions, they form the basis of all our mental operations.

The next point to be observed is, that our mental phenomena do not recur arbitrarily, but according to a certain order and arrangement, the law of which is termed the association of ideas. This law of our mental constitution is shown to play the most momentous part in man's intellectual and moral development, causing our ideas to cluster together, and become at length indissolubly united, either in the synchronous or successive order, according, of course, as the sensations, of which they are copies, have been experienced synchronically or successively. In the former case they give rise to *complex notions*, in the latter to *trains of thought*.<sup>3</sup>

The next important fact, is that of assigning to our sensations and ideas certain *names*, in order that we may communicate them to others or retain them more easily for ourselves ; under which head

<sup>1</sup> Chap. i. secs. 6, 7, 8.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. ii. p. 41.

<sup>3</sup> Chap. iii. throughout

our author goes into a long and very luminous exposition of the origin and nature of the various parts of speech, of which all language consists.<sup>1</sup> This, then, we may consider as the *groundwork* of Mill's whole analysis, the elementary processes being reduced to sensation, ideation, association, and naming. The rest of his work is occupied in showing how from these elements all the complex phenomena of the human mind may be fully and satisfactorily explained. Into this part of the analysis we shall now briefly enter, giving the principal conclusions, that are arrived at, in our own words.

First of all, *consciousness*, inasmuch as it applies generally to every mental phenomenon, is simply a generic term, under which all the subordinate classes of feeling are included; which, therefore, can no more contain any element different from the feelings themselves, than any other genus can contain *essentially* aught that is not in its species.<sup>2</sup>

*Conception* is likewise a generic term, only less extensive than consciousness; inasmuch as the latter is a universal name to include *all mental phenomena*, whether sensations or ideas, while the former is the name of a class of phenomena comprehending ideas only.<sup>3</sup>

*Imagination* is the same as conception, with this simple difference—that, whereas conception is ap-

<sup>1</sup> Chap. iv., which contains also a long section on Predication, in which the author gives his view of the principal processes of formal logic.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. v.

<sup>3</sup> Chap. vi.

plied as a generic term to mean *individual* ideas, imagination is only applied to *trains* of ideas, which hang together by the law of association. When I am conscious of *one* idea in the mind, I conceive; when I am conscious of a succession, I imagine.<sup>1</sup>

*Classification*, or *generalisation*, a process which has given rise to so much metaphysical discussion, is easily explained. I give a name to an individual; I then apply the same term to another individual of a similar kind; then to a third, and a fourth, and so on, until the term by the indissoluble law of association calls up indefinitely any of the individuals, to which I have severally applied it. Thus, a general term is not the mark of a reality, as the realists supposed, nor is it a word without any idea attached to it at all, as the nominalists assert; but it is the mark with which an indefinite number of simple ideas is associated, and under which they become combined.<sup>2</sup>

*Abstraction* is a somewhat different process. We experience a given sensation in connexion with different clusters of qualities, as a black man, a black horse, a black eagle: we give this sensation a name, say "*black*," in order to note it, and we *connote* or name with it the particular cluster, to which in any given case it is applied. In some instances, however, we drop the connotation, and, in order to show this, we add some mark to the term which expresses the original sensation. Thus

<sup>1</sup> Chap. vii. p. 178.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. viii. p. 206, *et seq.*



we may think of *black*, without assigning anything which is black, and then to mark the fact of all connotation being dropped, we add *ness* to it, and form the abstract term blackness. On this principle, then, abstractions are simply concrete terms with the connotation dropped.<sup>1</sup>

*Memory* is an important phenomenon, but by no means an original faculty. It contains, first, the idea of the thing remembered, and secondly, the idea of my having seen it. The former element is easily accounted for by association, but the latter element is more complex. This is found, on analysing it, to consist of three things—the present or remembering self, the former or remembered self, and the train of consciousness which intervenes between them, and identifies the two selves as being the same personality. To explain fully, therefore, the nature of memory, we have to await the analysis of the ideas of personal identity and of time.<sup>2</sup>

*Belief* is the next point to be noticed, which is of three kinds—Belief in events or of real existences, belief in testimony, and belief in the truth of propositions. The first kind of belief is a case of very close and immediate association. This we see illustrated in the belief of our acquired perceptions, where we indissolubly associate certain distances, &c., with certain shades of colouring.<sup>3</sup> The same principle holds good with respect to our belief in the existence of a cause as antecedent to every.

<sup>1</sup> Chap. ix.    <sup>2</sup> Chap. x. p. 251.    <sup>3</sup> Chap. xi. p. 259, *et seq.*

effect, and of matter as the ultimate cause at which our association stops.<sup>1</sup> The second kind of belief, that which we yield to testimony, is also a case of association, depending equally upon experience, inasmuch as we firmly associate reality with that species of testimony, which we have previously found to be uniformly true.<sup>2</sup> The third kind of belief, that of the truth of propositions, is synonymous with judgment, which, in fact, is nothing more than our recognition of the coincidence that exists in the meaning of two names. Thus, when I say, "Man is a rational animal," I simply recognise the fact, that the two names, man and rational animal, stand for the same thing.<sup>3</sup> Last of all, *ratiocination* is to be regarded as a case of judgment in its most perfect and extended form, which thus completes the analysis of our intellectual powers, and reduces them all to the elements which we have just before indicated.<sup>4</sup>

Having finished this portion of his task, the author proceeds to test its accuracy by investigating those *terms*, which, in all metaphysical systems, have been generally considered the most remarkable, as well as most difficult of explanation. Beginning with terms which express relation, as those employed when sensations, ideas, or external objects

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xi. p. 263, *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 268, *et seq.* See also here the expectancy of the uniformity of nature's operations resolved into a case of association.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 300.

<sup>4</sup> Chap. xii.

are mentioned *in pairs*, he shows the notion of a *line*, to be involved partly in the sensations of touch, and partly in those of a muscular nature, which accompany the extending of the arm.<sup>1</sup> The notions of *cause* and *effect* are explained to be synonymous with the antecedence and consequence of phenomena.<sup>2</sup> The idea of *extension* is supposed to be a modification of those sensations by which we conceive of lines as greater or less; and then, lastly, those abstract terms which we apply to objects as being related to each other in respect of *quantity* or *quality*, are so analysed, as to appear equally dependent with the rest upon the aid of experience.<sup>3</sup>

Next to relative terms, he proceeds to prove that *numbers* are simply marks to show that one sensation comes after another;<sup>4</sup> that *privative* terms generally are merely indicative of the absence of sensations, or rather expressive of that state of consciousness, which the absence of sensations produces; that *space* being an instance of such terms, is merely the privation or absence of bulk; and that the term *infinity* indicates that state of consciousness in which the idea of *one unit more*, if it be number, or of *one portion more*, if it be extension, is closely associated with every preceding number or portion that has gone before it.<sup>5</sup> The only three important terms that now remain, are time, motion, and identity.

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xiv. p. 22.    <sup>2</sup> Chap. xiv. p. 37.    <sup>3</sup> Chap. xiv. p. 39, *et seq.*

<sup>4</sup> Chap. xiv. sec. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Chap. xiv. sec. 4.

*Time*, according to Mr Mill, is derived from the succession of our sensations. In this succession there is always something past, something present, and something future, which, by dropping the connotation and adding the sign, gives us pastness, presentness, and futureness. The combination of these three gives rise to all that is contained in our idea of time. It is, to use the author's own language, a single-worded abstract, involving the meaning of these three several abstracts.<sup>1</sup> *Motion*, again, is the abstract idea of moving. In the idea of a body moving, there are the ideas of the body itself, of position, of a line, and of succession, all of which may be accounted for on sensational principles. Take, then, a number of moving bodies, drop the connotation, and we have the whole idea of motion.<sup>2</sup> Lastly, *identity* is merely another term for *sameness*, and this, again, is simply expressive of a certain case of belief, the evidence of which varies with the subject, but which in every case arises from association, and, consequently, from experience.<sup>3</sup>

With regard to the *active powers*, our author's analysis of these is equally ingenious with that of the intellectual. Sensations are, some pleasurable, and others painful: when, therefore, we recall them, the ideas they give rise to must also be either of a pleasurable or painful nature. Our state of consciousness, however, in the sensation is essentially

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xiv. sec. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* sec.

*Ibid.* sec. 7.

different from that in the idea, inasmuch as we cannot revive the actual pleasure or pain which were caused by the bodily affection, but only the recollection of them. The *idea* of pleasure, therefore, in contradistinction to the *sensation* of pleasure, we term desire; the idea of pain, aversion.<sup>1</sup>

Sometimes, again, pleasure or pain arises from an immediate cause, and sometimes from a remote: the lash of the executioner is an instance of the one, the sentence of the judge the other, since in this latter case the pain comes at one remove from the actual sensational feeling. In the same manner pleasurable and painful *ideas*, that is, desires and aversions, often come from remote causes, while they derive still further variations from being contemplated as past or future. In these few principles we have, according to Mill, the basis of all the passions, desires, and emotions of the human mind, and only need to search further into the more remote causes, from which they spring, in order to gain a complete analysis of this part of our constitution.<sup>2</sup>

Amongst these causes we find that certain objects, by virtue of particular associations with them, excite in us the feeling that we term the sublime and the beautiful; whilst other pleasurable or painful feelings, which arise as consequent, either upon our own actions or those of our fellow-creatures, have acquired the name of the moral sentiments.

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xix.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. xxi. sec. 2.

Here, therefore, we have the foundation of all æsthetical and moral philosophy.<sup>1</sup>

With regard to the *will*, which is usually considered as constituting so large an element in our moral life, our author considers that it is synonymous with desire; that an action is said to be willed when it is desired as the means to a certain end, or rather, when it is associated as a cause with pleasure as the effect; and that the muscular actions of the body, which are usually termed voluntary, are, in fact, *necessarily* consequent upon certain sensations or ideas, which we can only control through the medium of the great law of association.<sup>2</sup> Such is a brief and necessarily imperfect outline of Mill's analysis. To estimate it fully, it must be read and studied throughout; but yet, the above sketch may be sufficient to show the kind of philosophy which it advocates, although it very inadequately conveys the arguments, by which it is supported.

Now, in offering some remarks upon this system, we must first of all inquire, what the starting point is from which it proceeds, and what the elements which are taken for granted as being primary and unresolvable; because upon this first step the whole character of any philosophical system mainly depends. In looking to this point we see at once, that the phenomena of mind in the system before us are not traced to a single, and uniform source.

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xxiii.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. xxiv.

The French sensationalists, as we shall hereafter have occasion to show, started with the simple product of sense as the sole groundwork of all mental manifestation, and attempted to prove that every phenomenon is a movement, more or less disguised, of this one faculty. The idealistic philosophers, again, started with the pure conceptions of reason, and attempted to build up the whole superstructure of knowledge upon this basis. In the work before us, on the contrary, there are clearly *two* primitive elements brought forward, sensations and ideas; and consequently two original and corresponding powers of mind, namely, sensation, and what might be analogically termed *ideation*. Of these, however, sensation occupies by far the superior place, inasmuch as it furnishes all the original materials of our thoughts, while an idea is taken to signify, not (as Locke would have it) everything about which the mind can be occupied, but simply the traces of our sensations, which are left, after the outward cause is removed.

Now, in this admitted faculty of forming *ideas* of things, there is more involved, we imagine, than seems in the work before us to be supposed. *E. g.* Instead of reducing such faculties as memory and judgment to the two elements above stated (that of sensations and ideas), we much doubt whether they are not involved as simpler elements in the process of ideation itself. An idea, it is affirmed, is the trace or copy of a sensation, and it is essential to it, on this principle, that we should recognise it *as*

*being the representative of the original or sensational feeling*, otherwise the inward idea could have no practical reference to any outward reality. But the question is, how am I to know without the aid of memory, that there ever was a sensation which preceded it; or, in other words, how am I to refer the state of consciousness, in which I exist when I have an idea, to a former state, in which I existed, when I had a sensation? In order to know that the idea has anything to do with a previous sensation, there must be a consciousness of the fact, that something *was* in my mind as well as the fact, that something *is* in it; and to know this requires the power we term memory—a power which consciously connects the past with the present, and without which consequently it is impossible for the theory of ideation to be complete. Again, if an idea be a trace or relic of a sensation, the knowledge of this involves not only memory, but also a *comparison* between two states of consciousness. If no comparison is made, how am I justified in saying that my idea is a trace of, or has anything to do with, a sensation? but if a comparison *is* made, then there must be some mental power or process by which such relations are observed, and this process we term judgment. By no conceivable method could memory and judgment arise simply from the successive consciousness of sensations and ideas; for those successive states of mind must have eternally remained *separate* and *isolated* points in our being, had not the *power* of memory and the *power* of judgment



united them into a continued and connected stream of conscious existence. We cannot but suspect, therefore, that Mr Mill explained the simple by the complex, rather than the complex by the simple.

Empirical writers, in fact, are perpetually addicted to the habit of regarding our sensations as though they were already notions, and cancelling that whole process of the intellect, which takes place between the bare sensational feeling, and the complete idea, when put into such a form as to make a distinct element in our knowledge. A sensation is but the consciousness of the moment: it is an evanescent *feeling*, which lasts only while the organ is affected, and then is completely and for ever gone. To form a notion these evanescent feelings are grasped, combined, and shaped into certain moulds, by the intellectual or constructive faculty, just as the shapeless particles inserted in the kaleidoscope are thrown into their several forms by the inward construction of the glasses. Take any notion as an example—say a house. Mere sensation cannot account for this. As a sensation, it would be simply a subjective feeling—a momentary consciousness, not an abiding idea. And if it cannot be an idea itself, neither can its trace or image be so. To form the notion of a house, I must have the conception of an external object, which is something quite different from the sensational feeling; I must view it as occupying space, as possessing quantity, quality, and relations; and all this implies an intellectual process, which is quite lost.

sight of by those, who speak of our sensations as giving us the whole conception of things themselves. The inward or intellectual element, in short, is just as necessary to the existence of *experience* as the outward, or sensational.

The whole theory of ideation, indeed, is grounded on a false and illusive material analogy. It is supposed that as the impression of an object upon any soft material remains after the object is gone, so the impressions of our sensations remain on the mind. We have no reason to suppose that any such impression remains. My *idea* of an object does not stand to the *sensation* of it, in the relation of an image to its original. The true statement of the case is this—that when the sensational feeling is produced by contact of the object with the nervous system, the understanding shapes the material thus afforded into a *notion*, supplying from its own constitution the *mould* in which this notion is to be thrown. Having done so, the notion exists in the mind as a part of our experience, and can be recalled by the aid of memory at any future period, whenever the laws of association may prompt.

From the consideration of the human faculties we now come to the deduction of our purely intellectual notions. And here there are still greater objections that arise against the conclusions of the work before us. In this department of his analysis the peculiar theory, which is maintained, *of cause and effect*, lies at the foundation of almost all the other results. Mr Mill considered it proved be-

yond the possibility of a doubt, nay, since the days of Brown, to have become almost axiomatic, that cause and effect imply nothing more than uniform precedence and consequence. This, however, must be regarded as far too bold and hasty an assumption, when we consider that the doctrine referred to is denied almost universally by the German metaphysicians; when we hear one of the greatest thinkers of our day calling it "*a fantastical theory which gives a denial to universal belief, and to facts; a theory destructive of all true metaphysics;*"<sup>1</sup> and when we find even the first natural philosopher of the age describing Brown's theory as one "*in which the whole train of argument is vitiated by one enormous oversight, the omission, namely, of a distinct and immediate personal consciousness of causation in his enumeration of that sequence of events, by which the volition of the mind is made to terminate in the motion of material objects.*"<sup>2</sup> We contend, as will be more fully explained elsewhere, that the conscious effort of our own will gives us the distinct idea of *power* in causation, which then becomes to us the type of those vast ever-working powers of the universe, by

<sup>1</sup> See Victor Cousin, in his Preface to the "Remains" of M. de Biran.

<sup>2</sup> See Sir John Herschel's Treatise on Astronomy, in the "Cabinet Cyclop.," p. 232. We may here remark that it has of late years become very common amongst many writers to assume the truth of Brown's theory as altogether unquestionable, and as being universally admitted. We know not whether to attribute this assumption to ignorance, or to sophistry—it seems hard to account for it upon any third principle.

which we are surrounded, the foundation of our confidence in the uniformity of nature, and the basis of our belief in the great First Cause of all things.

If, therefore, the fundamental principle, on which so much is built up, is shaken, the analysis of some other of our most important ideas becomes vastly modified. Let us take that of *substance*, which our author conceives to be a case of indissoluble association, arising from the inveterate habit, we have gradually formed, of assigning a ground or cause to all phenomena. According to this theory, we may talk about *clusters* of sensations, but to talk about substance, matter, substratum, or any thing of this kind, is merely giving objective existence to a pure imagination of our own minds. "To each of the sensations," says Mr Mill, "which we receive from a particular object, we annex in our imagination *a cause*, and to these several causes we annex a cause common to all, and mark it with the name substratum."<sup>1</sup> We have arrived, therefore, if this be true, at pure Berkeleian idealism, and the sceptic may now come and chastise us for our folly in believing anything so unreal as a material world. The philosophy that commences in pure sensationalism has no choice but to end in an idealistic scepticism. The extremes of both systems here meet in one.

But, we doubt not, our author would have prac-

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xi. p. 263, *et seq.*

tically repudiated these sceptical conclusions, and protested that he was far from rejecting the real existence of matter as something over and beyond our perception of qualities. On what ground, then, would he make this protest? Is it sufficient to say that his association of ideas is so strong that he cannot help assigning, as antecedent or cause to such associations, *something that really exists*? Is it not clear that the sceptic may shatter this argument at once by assigning a thousand strong associations, to which no reality whatever can be attached? Has not many a man, for example, closely associated with his fear at being alone in the dark the conception of a goblin or ghost? Why is it, then, that he still holds to his practical conviction of a material world, while he laughs at the goblin, both being similarly cases of strong association? It cannot be because the association in the one instance is so much stronger than in the other, for such is not actually the case. Should we not rather say, "My belief in a material world is simple and indestructible, it can be traced back to my earliest conscious being, it has never been strengthened by accumulated associations, never weakened by any subversive arguments, nay, it is a necessary element in the relation I feel between my conscious self, and that around me which is not-self; between the subjective and the objective element in every sensation, I have experienced, from my earliest existence to the present hour."

Instead, therefore, of reducing perception, as

Mr Mill does, to a case of strong association, we contend, with the philosopher of Scotland, that it implies the existence of another faculty higher than sensation; that it contains a primitive *judgment*, in which the idea of substance is involved without the aid of association at all. The whole doctrine of belief in real existences, as here stated, proceeds upon the supposition that it is the superior *vividness* of the idea, or strength of the association that constitutes our confidence in objective reality. These two facts, however—1st, that the most insignificant sensation brings conviction, while the most vivid pictures of imagination do not, and, 2dly, that one single case of conjunction produces belief in the relation of cause and effect, as firmly as a thousand—can never on this hypothesis be adequately explained. And even supposing the ideas above referred to, to be explained by means of association, still it must be remembered that association itself implies certain deeper *laws*, by which its exercise is regulated. So that after all the labour that has been expended upon the attempt at reducing all the more complex phenomena of mind to this one principle, we must fall back at last upon the fundamental laws of belief, by which that very principle operates.<sup>1</sup>

To go at length over the analysis of the other

<sup>1</sup> "To me it appears evident that association itself, how comprehensive soever it may be, is only a particular law, regulated by the still more comprehensive and indeed universal laws of human belief. \* \* Is it not obvious that our associations themselves are necessarily

notions which are adduced, such as infinity, time, space, &c., would carry us further into the discussion of these questions than is compatible with our present plan. It has been one of the many grand results of a spiritual and more reflective philosophy, however, to show, that the idea of *the absolute* plainly marks one great division of our knowledge ; that the infinite stands in such a manner opposed to the finite, as that the conception of the former must necessarily be involved in the latter ; and that time and space are both particular modifications, which the notions of the finite and infinite undergo. To any theory, like that of Mill's, which places the idea of body, substance, or bulk at the foundation of that of space, there lies the insuperable objection, that we cannot conceive of body at all except as it exists in space ; and that, although we may require to be brought into contact with body prior to our forming the conception of space, yet that *logically* the former must be posterior to, because it involves the notion of, the latter. In the same manner, against any theory, which reduces time simply to the succession of events, there lies the similar objection, that if you take away the notion of duration, no succession is possible, inasmuch as all succession implies continued duration between the points of

regulated by these primary laws ? Is not the relation of cause and effect one of those, by which our ideas are associated ? And do we not associate certain feelings with certain external phenomena, *because* these do, first of all, by their very nature, suggest the existence in which we believe ?" Young's "Lectures," lec. xxix. p. 292.

consciousness, just in the same manner as body implies continued space between the atoms of which it is composed. Time and space, therefore, are *a priori* intuitions, which are absolutely necessary as elements in all our experience. The former gives us the sphere of all inward, the latter of all outward observation; time being that in which all the flow of our thoughts must take place; space being that in which all external objects, to our perception, must exist. As to the notion of *identity* or self, we should argue that this too cannot be deduced from experience, because it is already implied in every act of consciousness. Without this notion there would be no unity in our sensations or ideas, no chain to bind them together; our conscious existence would be only a series of unconnected impressions, and the experience of the last hour might belong to a different being from that of the present. While, therefore, we cannot but read with much admiration many of the acute and able analyses of notions, with which the work we are considering abounds; yet, in those cases where our primitive judgments and the ideas flowing from them are concerned, we cannot but consider, that the author has been led astray from the truth by the sensational theory he was labouring to sustain.

The view which Mr Mill has taken of the intellectual powers could not but have some influence upon his theory of the *emotions*. Sensations and emotions are regarded by him as generically syno-



nymous, so that the feeling produced by the lash of an executioner, and that produced by the sentence of the judge, are each spoken of as a sensation, the one arising from an immediate, the other from a remote cause. These two classes of feelings, on the other hand, we regard as vastly dissimilar. The one arises immediately from the presence of an external object, the other, being an *emotion*, has no immediate connexion with such object; the one feeling springs from without, the other from within; the one follows upon an affection of the nerves, the other from a conception of the mind; the one is entirely uncontrollable so long as the bodily affection lasts, the other is, to a great extent, under the dominion of the will. The only *sensation*, which the judge produces, is occasioned by the air set in motion by his organs of speech acting on the tympanum of the prisoner's ear; but it is the *meaning* of the words he utters, acting upon the intellect, that sends a thrill of shuddering *emotion* through his frame. We can conceive of no system of psychology rendering an adequate view of all the phenomena of our nature, unless the broad line of distinction is plainly marked between the sensitive and the emotional faculty. This might be shown far more clearly in the case of the moral emotions than any other; into these, however, we shall now forbear to enter, inasmuch as the ethics of sensationalism will come more fully before us in the next section.

There is one point, however, we would further touch upon, and that is the account which our

author gives us of *the will*. According to this account, it seems to us impossible to avoid drawing the conclusion, that human life is altogether the sport of *circumstantial fatalism*. The elements of volition, on his theory, are sensations, ideas, and motives, leading lastly to muscular movements of the frame. First, I experience a sensation ; next, I am conscious of this sensation leaving its trace behind it, and forming an idea ; thirdly, the power of association comes to bear upon the matter, and leads me to connect certain actions of my own as causes, with pleasure as the result, which is all that we mean by a motive ; then, lastly, the internal feeling of pleasure, I experience, produces the muscular movements which we know to accompany volition. Every step in the process of human action as here described, it will be seen, is passive and uncontrollable. The sensation is so in the first instance, the idea is so in the next, that peculiar association by which a desire or motive is created is so in the third, and the power which our internal feelings have over the muscular frame is so in the last. The defect in the process here described is what Sir J. Herschel terms the “enormous oversight” of leaving out our *distinct and personal consciousness of causation*. Every man assuredly acts on the conviction, that he is in himself a finite power, or cause of such a nature, that he can, if he choose, oppose the instinctive impulses of sense, and modify outward circumstances by his own voluntary determination. Amidst all the influence of external

agents upon us, we still feel perfectly conscious, that we can originate action from within, that we can form purposes, stay their execution, make a final determination, and then pass from the inward volition to the outward execution, which execution again we can continue or suspend by means of the same will which gave it a commencement. The human mind, therefore, is something independent of its circumstances; it is a spontaneous, self-regulating existence—a distinct personality, the very essence of which consists in activity. Accordingly the fundamental error, as we think, of all systems of sensationalism, consists in taking for granted, that *mind*, until the channels of sense convey to it life and feeling, is a nonentity, or at any rate a mere passive entity; whilst in fact we can no more conceive of it without thought and action, than we can of matter without figure and extension. This point, however, will again recur, so that we shall for the present pursue it no further.

The only other thing, we have now to remark, is the total silence which is observed by our author upon man's religious faculty. That the existence of God, the infinite essence, the "*causa causarum*," could not be deduced on the principles laid down in the work before us, is manifest; because even if we possessed the distinct *conception*, its whole objective reality would be destroyed by reducing it, as must be the case, to a strong instance of the power of association, leading us to assign a cause to all phenomena. That the religious *emotions*, moreover, must

in this philosophy all be considered as purely pathological, is equally clear, because emotions and sensations are viewed as being altogether homogeneous. We see no room, therefore, in the system of psychology we have just considered, for any of the more lofty and spiritual phenomena of human nature. The soul fettered down to sense, can only live in the present; its noblest conceptions are but the images of sensual objects; its highest perception of moral law, is but a calculation of pleasure and pain; the foundations of religion, so far as they depend upon our rational ideas of God, of Duty, of Immortality, are undermined; and the holy stream of disinterested love to God, in which the weary spirit finds its only rest, is dried up at the very fountain. Whether the author would have sanctioned such inferences, I have no means whatever of judging; but unless I have greatly mistaken his principles, the application of correct logic must necessarily bring such conclusions sooner or later to light.

The whole of our objections, then, may now be concentrated in a single remark. The author, it is evident, fixed his attention upon one of the great fundamental facts of our consciousness, that of finite nature operating upon us through the channels of sense. In looking steadfastly to this fact, he doubtless succeeded in analysing many phenomena, that might otherwise have eluded all observation; but in the meantime he entirely lost sight of the other two fundamental notions, those of the active

self and the infinite. Through the omission of these elements he reduced our pure and primitive ideas to the character of mere abstractions, and the energy of the will to that of a passive sensational feeling.

The error committed is the exact opposite of that which Kant committed before him. The German philosopher, in discovering all the *forms* of the understanding, neglected sufficiently to analyse the *matter*; the English philosopher, on the contrary, in directing his attention almost exclusively to the matter, wellnigh entirely neglected the form. Many thanks, however, are still due to him for his labours, inasmuch as they give one tack to the vessel in which the world's philosophy is sailing, which, while it takes that vessel for a time from its true course, will, nevertheless, aid in bringing it at last so much further on its way to the land, where truth reposes. Analysis, as we have before remarked, to be close and penetrating, must give rise to error as well as to truth; it only needs an enlightened eclecticism to grasp the one, and to reject the other.

We have entered into Mr Mill's analysis somewhat more fully than we should have done, (considering that our design is to give a brief historical sketch of the different systems of philosophy with their comparative merits, rather than to dwell at length upon the works of particular authors,) because it is so able a representative of the advanced school of Locke, as existing in England during the

present century. Not that we mean to say, that Locke and Mill in all respects coincide. So far from that, the points of difference are very considerable, and on many questions, as that of the classification of the intellectual powers, quite dissimilar ; but still both the method and the nature of the analysis so closely resemble each other in the two cases, that they are at once seen to belong to the same school of philosophy.

The precise position which Mill would take in the scale of sensationalism, is about midway between Locke on the one hand, and the French Ideologists on the other. The latter of these regard all mental operations as being different forms of sensation ; the former, although looking upon the senses as the primary source from whence the *material* of our knowledge is derived, yet strongly asserts the existence of certain active faculties, by which this material is moulded ; the author now before us, differing from both, admits only sensations and ideas, comprehending under these more than the French philosophers, but by no means so much as our great English metaphysician would contend for. Other writers of the same class have wavered somewhere between these two points, but they all retain such a degree of resemblance to each other, that to adduce them here would be only to reproduce similar doctrines under varied forms, and then to urge against them similar objections ; neither, indeed, were we to attempt it, could we bring forward any authors, who have set forth the main doctrines

themselves with so much clearness and force of reasoning, as the one we have already examined.

There is one work, however, recently published, of such great and unquestionable merit, that it were wrong to omit a distinct mention of it, in estimating the sensational phenomena of the present age—I mean a work entitled, “A system of Logic Ratiocinative and Inductive,” by John Stuart Mill. The author, it is true, aims simply at discovering and expounding the proper methods of investigating truth, without pledging himself to any system of speculative philosophy; but still there are so many points of a speculative nature touched upon, all in the spirit of the “Analysis” above considered, that he must necessarily be regarded as a partisan of the modern Lockian school of metaphysics. The evidences of his adherence to this school are scattered more or less throughout the whole work. Let us adduce one or two examples.

First, in his discussion of the real meaning to be attached to the term *substance*, he embraces the opportunity of placing the science of ontology entirely beyond the reach of the human faculties.<sup>1</sup> Not, indeed, that he has pretended to enter into the full merits of the case, since that would have been foreign to the object of his whole work; but the view he takes of the question, “*en passant*,” implies, that we have no right to assume any conception as asserting objective validity, which lies (as

<sup>1</sup> Vol. i. p. 78, *et seq.*

that of substance does) without the range of our sense-perceptions, and rests upon purely rational or intuitive evidence. According to this view of the question, we may understand somewhat of qualities, since they come to us as actual phenomena, but we can know nothing of substance, since, if it exist, it is hidden behind a screen of impenetrable obscurity.

Now we believe that a thorough analysis of the case will show, that *reason* has as much right to assure us of the nature and existence of being or substance, as perception has to assure us of the phenomena we term qualities ; that just in the same manner as we have an outward intuition of the one by the senses, so we have an inward intuition of the other by the reason. The cognisance of attributes by perception is as much a *subjective process*, as much a part of my inward consciousness, as is the cognisance of matter or substance by the reason ; and if we deny the objective validity of the latter, there is no superior evidence why we should accept that of the former. As well may we, in fact, reject the reality of any *quality* as an objective phenomenon, as reject the substratum in which it adheres. We know the *properties* of the external world, says our author, because we have sensations which immediately convey them. But then, what are sensations except states of mind ? If a state of mind termed *sensation* can give us the knowledge of properties, why may not a state of mind termed intuition or *reason* give us the knowledge of sub-



stance? Reason has as much right to take us out of ourselves as perception, and if the one cannot assert objective validity, neither can the other. Let any one say, therefore, on what ground we can *believe the existence* of any thing whatever out of ourselves, and we can show him the same ground for believing in the reality of substance—let any one, moreover, show on what principle we can *comprehend* the nature of any objective reality, and we can show the same principle of comprehension with reference to substance. There is no valid medium, therefore, as it seems to us, between complete subjective idealism, like that of Fichte on the one side, and the admission of ontology as a proper branch of scientific investigation on the other. So long as we keep within the subjective circle, we are pure subjective Idealists; but once without it, we have the same access to *being* as to mere phenomenon, that is, we have simply the guarantee of our faculties for either.

Another very decisive proof of the author's sensational tendency is found in his support of Brown's theory of causation.<sup>1</sup> In no work with which we are acquainted is the law of causality so ingeniously and plausibly traced to experience as in this; and in none is the whole theory put in a more forcible and unobjectionable light. Ingenuity, however, though it may mislead for a time, will never succeed eventually in carrying along with it the suffrages

<sup>1</sup> Vol. I. Book iii. chap. 5.

of mankind against the fundamental convictions of human nature. Try as we will to sink all idea of a real connexion between cause and effect, the belief will eternally recur; and however plausibly the theory may be propounded, yet it will ever be found wanting so long as there is left out in the analysis the one important link to which we have before referred, that of a personal consciousness of *power*.

Instead, then, of resting the evidence of the law of causality upon a simple induction of empirical facts, we should trace its establishment to a process of the following nature :—Every man, when he produces change upon the outer world, is conscious of putting forth a *power* in volition, which power is exerted upon the external object. If the same power be again put forth in similar circumstances, he knows intuitively, that the same change will take place. Hence the notion of *power*, put forth by some cause, is associated with the perception of *every* effect; and the force emanating from our own will becomes the type upon which we conceive of power, as universally exerted in the production of every other possible phenomenon. Thus the law of causation primarily emanates from our own volition, and being expanded by the aid of experience, at length assumes the form of a universal principle, applicable to all the phenomena of the universe. To this subject, however, we shall again return.

Another aspect of Mr Mill's sensationalism is given in his controversy with Prof. Whewell respecting the foundations of mathematical reason-

ing.<sup>1</sup> We are aware that the side he defends is to a certain extent strengthened by the name of Dugald Stewart, and some other writers of high standing in the philosophical world ; but, nevertheless, we are unable to confess ourselves convinced by the whole line of argument they have employed. The point of the controversy is this—What is the ground of belief in mathematical axioms? Are they experimental truths, *i. e.*, generalisations from experience, or are they necessary truths, arising from the *a priori* intuition of the human reason? Mill asserts the former to be the case, Whewell contends for the latter.

The discussion of the question, which when expanded might occupy a volume, virtually concentrates itself upon two points. It is argued, first by the spiritualist, that an experimental truth must be one that is cognisable by the senses ; and that, as this is not the case with mathematical axioms and conceptions, they must necessarily be removed beyond the limits of mere empiricism. Take, for example, the axiom, that two straight lines cannot enclose space, even if they be *prolonged to infinity*. Were this a truth of simple observation (it is contended), we could never be assured of its accuracy, because we can never see an instance in which two intersecting lines are *infinitely* produced. Whence, then, comes the conviction, that, supposing them to be so, still there is a necessity that they should pre-

<sup>1</sup> Vol. I. Book ii. chap. 5 and 6.

sent just the same relative properties? To this it is replied in the work before us, that mathematical truths are such as can be painted on the imagination to any extent; that although we can never *see* two lines infinitely produced, yet we can conceive them to be so; and that, by a kind of internal observation, we become convinced that they will always hold the same relations to each other, as by the aid of direct sensation we perceive them to hold on a small scale.

That there is some ingenuity in this theory must be freely admitted, but still it is open to many objections. Let us allow, for argument's sake, that a mental picture of all possible lines and angles may be depicted on the imagination. This picture must either represent cases which fall *within* the actual limits of our experience, or cases which lie entirely *beyond* them. The former representation, of course, may be referred simply to the power of conception, or (as Mr Mill might call it) ideation. Its result is an *idea* made from the direct information of the senses, and answering accurately to it. So far, therefore, there is nothing to serve the cause of the sensationist; as *all* would admit that we may have an experimental idea of *anything* of which we can have a sensation. If, however, we depict what we have never witnessed "*in sensu*," (as, for example, the case above quoted, of two intersecting lines infinitely produced,) then the question comes, What law, or what necessity does *this* representation follow? Mr Mill would explain it by saying, that

the actual experience we have in the one case leads us to imagine the same relations to hold good in the other case—that, namely, which lies *beyond* experience. But here the very stress of the difficulty is untouched, for the inquiry still returns—Why should our imagination be thus bounded by sense? —Why are we *necessitated* to conceive of these lines and angles in definite and particular relations? In other subjects the imagination roves at will, and forms relations entirely at variance with all experience. Objects the most heterogeneous are linked together by the wild and capricious effort of the fancy. Why not in this subject also? *Actual* experience, it is allowed, could never show us, that two *infinite* intersecting lines would never meet;—why, then, may we not *imagine* them as meeting; or on what is grounded the subjective *necessity* of depicting them eternally diverging? It appears to us, that there is but one explanation of the matter, namely, that *reason* forbids it. Once get beyond the bounds of sense, once allow the conceptive faculties to take the thing into their own hands, and we see not that, in this case more than in any other, they would be bound to follow the dictates of experience, or that their conceptions can properly be limited by anything, except by the very laws of our mental constitution.

Let any one ask himself, *what it is* which gives us the conviction that the relations of the experimental case will precisely answer to those of the imaginary and supersensual? It is not enough to

say, that experience forbids the supposition, that the relations should vary in the two instances, for with the latter instance, experience confessedly has nothing to do. Such a conviction cannot possibly arise except from the fact, that the *a priori* forms of the understanding itself compel us to conceive of the relation of the lines in no other way, whether they be matters of experience, or whether they be not. In reply, therefore, to Mr Mill's argument, that the relations of figures lying beyond experience are imaginary inductions from those which lie within experience, we urge that the moment the empirical boundary is overstepped, all such inductions must be valueless; and that conviction can only now arise from the *necessity* of the case, which necessity is based upon the ground-forms of the understanding. The whole argument, in fact, that we reason in mathematics upon figures either of pure sense, or drawn from experience, will not stand the test of any careful examination. Experience could *never* give us perfect lines, triangles, and circles—to the senses they must all have breadth, and thickness, and irregularity;—and yet the whole of the reasoning proceeds upon the very hypothesis of their absolute perfection. “If we have no experience of facts relating to lines without breadth, and perfect circles, we cannot possibly have experience except *with relation* to lines possessing breadth, and imperfect circles, &c. But as things cannot divest themselves of any of their properties, we can only have experience of things *as they are*.

Experience is not an arbitrary act of mind. We have no control over experience ; we must take it exactly as it presents itself. As experience, therefore, cannot present us with phenomena divested of any features which are inseparable in actual fact from the phenomena, and we reason, according to our author, entirely upon experience, if we attempt to reason with respect to things, feigning them to be divested of some of their properties, we reason apart from experience, *i. e.* we do what we never do.”<sup>1</sup>

We must come, however, to the second great argument which the spiritualist employs, that, namely, arising from the *universality* and *necessity* of mathematical axioms. These two attributes, it is argued, could never flow from experience, inasmuch as no experience can extend to all possible cases, and become the voucher for universal and necessary truth. To this Mr Mill replies, that the necessity of a thing simply means the inconceivableness of its being otherwise, and that this inconceivableness all arises from the strength of the opposite associations.<sup>2</sup>

Now, if *mere* association can produce the feeling of necessity and universality, respecting which we are treating, then it must produce it alike in every case, where the association has been constant and uniform. For example, we have always associated snow with whiteness, and soot with blackness ;

<sup>1</sup> See British Quarterly Review, No. vii. p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. I. Book ii. chap. 5, sec. 6.

according to Mill's theory, therefore, we ought to consider the one *necessarily* white, and the other *necessarily* black. This is not, however, the case; there is nothing inconceivable, nothing contradictory to our reason in black snow, or in white soot; nor would it do violence to our faculties if we were to witness both of them to-morrow. The necessity we feel in the case of an axiom—such as, “that two right lines cannot enclose a space,” is altogether of a different nature. Here the word inconceivable, attached to the negation of the axiom, has a far more intense meaning than it has in the cases which Mr Mill adduces; so much so, that it would do violence to our reason to suppose that negation to be for one moment possible. Let any one put together the two propositions, “Snow is white,” and “Two right lines cannot enclose a space,” and consider, whether their contradictories are in the same degree of inconceivableness. If they are found to be not so, then there must be some additional reason beside association, which creates the idea of necessity in the latter. The cause of the difference, as it appears to us, is simply this, that the one would contradict my experience, the other would contradict my reason; the former axiom being an empirical induction, the latter being an *a priori* judgment.

We have brought forward these few theories from the work above mentioned, in order that they may serve as examples of the nature and spirit of Mr Mill's sensationalism. Upon the whole, however, the sensational doctrines do not appear



with nearly the same intensity, which they exhibit in the "Analysis of the Human Mind." In one passage particularly, the author very clearly expresses his doubt, whether the attempt at explaining all our abstruser sentiments, emotions, volitions, &c., by the laws of association, has been at all successful, and controverts the corresponding theory of belief, which is maintained in the "Analysis." Although, as we have seen, there are some points in the work to which we cannot agree, yet we cheerfully allow, that it must be placed among the very first efforts of philosophical thinking in our own country. We believe that the "System of Logic" is yet destined as a book of fertile suggestions to bring forth beneficial results, which many years to come will in all probability fail to exhaust.

Every school of philosophy, when it has given rise to works of a theoretical and then of a practical nature, begins to feel the want of an historian, who shall describe the progress of thought in the world from its own peculiar stand-point. The Analyst of the new sensational school of England was Mr James Mill—the Logician is Mr John S. Mill—the Historian has now appeared in Mr G. H. Lewes, writer of the "Biographical History of Philosophy," (Knight, 1846). The author of this little work has travelled in a small compass over the whole field of philosophy, from the earliest ages to the present day, and has investigated the most prominent systems, which appear on the page of history, with some vigour and success.

In spite of a levity of style, hardly consistent with the grave discussion of philosophical questions, and a dogmatism by no means attractive, he has thrown his elucidations and criticisms before us, with great clearness, and sometimes with considerable power of argumentation. At the same time we *altogether* differ from the view he has taken of the nature of metaphysical researches, and much fear that, were it carried out to its ultimate consequences, it would peril some of the most precious germs of human knowledge.

Mr Lewes, it should be understood, has carried his sensationalism so far as to profess himself an unmixed admirer of Comte, an entire advocate of positive science. In philosophy (by which he understands whatever relates to the origin of things or *causes*, and whatever relates to the existence of things *per se*, or their *essences*),<sup>1</sup> he has no belief. He admits, indeed, that it has answered a good end, inasmuch as it has led mankind to the real or positive method of investigating truth; but the whole attempt at solving *metaphysical* problems he sets down as utterly vain and hopeless. The history of philosophy, as he views it, is intended to show that all metaphysical investigations have gone round and round in one perpetual circle, that they have ever thrown the same great questions up to view, and that we are now as far from solving them as when the struggle first began. He proposes, therefore, to write the life of this wondrous thing—Phi-

<sup>1</sup> Vol. i. p. 16.

losophy ; which after having enlightened the world up to the nineteenth century, is at length defunct, or at least expiring.

Philosophy, then, being renounced the true object of human investigation, is affirmed to be positive science, "*the aim of which is to trace the co-existences and successions of phenomena, i. e. to trace the relation of cause and effect throughout the universe submitted to our inspection.*" In other words, what we have to do is to observe *facts*, and discover their *laws*; to this empirical process the whole sum of our knowledge is for ever confined.

Against this summary species of sensationalism the whole of our previous reflections, we trust have furnished many arguments; but we shall make now a few additional observations, more especially applicable to the work before us.

1. We cannot regard Mr Lewes's own account of the true office of philosophy as consistent with its alleged futility. He admits that it has been the great impulse to human research, the parent of positive science, nourishing, sustaining, directing the human faculties in their infancy, and leading them to all that is great and noble. Can it, then, be rational to affirm that philosophy, having been the mainspring of all human improvement, yet now, exactly in this very age, having given birth to an Auguste Comte, is from henceforth to be thrown aside as utterly worthless, and chased out of all our seats of learning? The thought at once suggests

itself, *Has* its end been fully answered? Can we call it the highest stretch of philosophy to produce a system of science which formally denies the existence of a God? May not some more struggles be yet necessary, to bring the human mind to the appreciation of the true method of all mental investigation? Having achieved the true method of *physical* research, may it not yet be a higher triumph of philosophy to achieve that of metaphysical and spiritual research also? For the honour, the glory, the happiness of humanity, we hope that it may be so.

But on what ground is it asserted, that metaphysical science is futile—what the theory on which its long life and approaching death is explained? No other than this: that human knowledge passes through three stages; the theological, the metaphysical, and the positive; and that as each succeeding stage is gained, the ideas peculiar to the one preceding it are exploded. Now it is admitted by our author, that while some sciences have reached the positive stage, others are still on the metaphysical, and others again on the theological stand-point. *His* conclusion is, that as *physical* science has been freed from its supernatural and abstract form, *all* our knowledge is travelling on to the same result. Our conclusion is quite the reverse; namely, that as the supernatural, the metaphysical, and the positive, have all existed more or less in every age, and exist now as much as ever, they are real elements of truth, to which the progress of mind is

gradually assigning their proper limits. Theology and philosophy still exist, and so they ever will as long as the human faculties remain what they are; never will positive science reach the height towards which the spiritual aspirations of man eternally tend, just in proportion as his rational and moral nature attains a loftier degree of purity and perfection.

2. But we are not yet prepared to grant that the peculiar problems of philosophy are so utterly hopeless, as our author makes them out. We do not regard his "irreversible canon" (that whatever relates to causes and essences, is entirely beyond our reach) as by any means so certain as he declares it. What is the universe around us? Is it merely a succession of phenomena? Does it either satisfy our reason or express our *whole* knowledge of the world to say, that all we can do is to observe and classify *appearances*? Unless we choose to plunge into the absolute idealism of Hegel, and only admit a universe of relations, we *must* suppose a real, substantial objective world; and to know that it *exists*, supposes a faculty which, to some extent or other, is cognisant of essences. So it is also with regard to *causes*. No empirical observations can give us the perception of *power*; but unless this is cognised as a reality by our reason, the unity of the world to us is gone; we can say nothing of a spiritual cause, we can never reach the valid conception of a God. Nay, if all ontology is denied, then our very personality can never be conceived

of; man cannot call himself an essence, he is but a succession of phenomena. The very same argument, in fact, by which the positive philosopher sweeps away the science of essence and cause, would likewise sweep away the science of phenomena also. How do we know the existence of substance and power? By a certain subjective state of our faculties. How do we know ought of phenomena? By another state equally subjective. Deny the validity of consciousness in the one case, as a voucher for objective reality, and what is to prevent my denying it in the other?

We insist, therefore, upon a knowledge of the existence both of essences and causes, and in the knowledge of their existence there is a germ of thought which may be expanded into a valid metaphysic, or, if the term be preferred, a valid ontology.

3. Our author will now probably come with the inquiry, "Have you, then, any ideas independent of experience; for on this the pretensions of metaphysics must be staked?" I answer, What is experience? What are its elements? Unless we have some ideas independent of experience, how is experience possible? Experience implies two elements—a *self* on the one side, an objective reality on the other. There must be an intuition of my own existence, there must be a subject to which the multiplicity of my ideas are referred as a primitive unity, else our consciousness would have no thread of connexion running through it. Moreover, there must be certain forms by which the

objective stimuli that act upon us are shaped into notions or ideas. Imagine the influences of the external world acting upon a perfectly formed human body, but tenanted by a mind without understanding or reason. These influences, it is admitted, would never convey knowledge to such a mind, because there would exist no faculties adapted to grasp them. But what does the existence of such faculties imply? Evidently the power of attaching certain forms, shapes, or conceptions to external phenomena—the power of reducing them to notions, and of giving them a character by which they take their place as real elements of human knowledge existing in the understanding. In this sense, we assuredly *do* possess something independent of experience; we possess, namely, those categories or forms of thought which give rise immediately to the primitive conceptions, under which all external things are viewed. Without this *a priori* element, experience itself would be impossible.<sup>1</sup>

4. We come to another point which appears to us to stand in a very unsatisfactory light in the work before us, and that is the ground-principle of religion. The author, on this subject, comes forth with one of his sweeping “fallaciæ plurium interrogationum,” in the following words: “Upon what does religion base itself? Upon reason or revelation?

<sup>1</sup> We must refer the reader here to what has already been said upon this point in our examination of the two foregoing writers;—especially to the difference between the sensation of a thing and the notion of it.

What do the Fathers teach? What do all the highest theological authorities teach? The question is pertinent, important. Do they teach, that human reason is competent to solve the problems of religion? Do they teach, that to reason man must look for certitude and conviction? No: they one and all energetically declare, as they are forced to declare, that reason is essentially a finite, limited, erring faculty, wholly incompetent to produce certitude and conviction." To this he adds in a note: "It would be idle to cite authorities for this fundamental and universally acknowledged position. We should be ashamed of alluding to it, did not the present discussion force us."<sup>1</sup> Now we imagine it would be more *difficult* to cite high authorities for this position than *idle*, if we understand it aright. What does it imply? It cannot mean simply that reason is incompetent to deduce *all* which faith reveals; for this view of the case would make nothing for the purpose which the author has before him, that of showing the *entire* separation of religion and philosophy. If it means, then, to assert that *all* religion bases itself upon revelation, or that the Fathers taught any such doctrine as this, we altogether deny it. Many of the Fathers built their theological notions, even too much, upon philosophical dogmas; and the *great mass* of theological authority, both in ancient and modern times, teaches us to base revealed religion upon the broader princi-

<sup>1</sup> Vol. iv. p. 43.



ples of natural religion. All the great systems of theology that the Church has produced, all at least which have any pretensions to merit, proceed distinctly upon this principle. And correctly so. How the existence of a God could possibly be revealed to us by inspiration or authority, is a problem which has never yet been solved. All revelation proceeds upon the *fact* of his existence, and we know not where this fact could ever find a valid basis, were it disowned as a primary conclusion of our reason and conscience. This brings us, then, to the very point in question. Can positive science, in the sense here employed, ever bring us to the conviction of the Being of a God? M. Comte says authoritatively *it cannot*, and we believe him to be right. Far are we from attributing this sentiment to those who advocate the positive principle, since there is nothing more unjust than to draw our own conclusions, and then force them upon other people; but we cannot see how the atheistic conclusion, into which the master openly sinks, can ultimately be avoided by the pupils. If all we can do is to observe phenomena and deduce their laws, if all inquiry both into causes and essences is entirely beyond our reach, we are quite at a loss to see how the belief in a God can be any other than what Comte represents it, namely, a delusion incident to the more infantile state of humanity. We contend, then, for a philosophy of religion. We affirm that the grounds of our religious belief, and the facts of our spiritual nature, can be subjected to philosophical investiga-

tion, as well as any other part of our mental phenomena. We believe that the history of every mind, if it be closely examined, and the history of humanity in the mass, all tend to prove some connexion with a spiritual world, without which *man* were a problem utterly inexplicable; and we look with jealous eye upon any system which tends to absorb the notions of the human spirit or the Infinite Spirit in that of nature, to cut us off from that which gives us all our dignity, and lends to human action all its grandeur and elevation.

5. We only add a single idea respecting the distinction, which is drawn in the work before us, between philosophy and positive science, on the ground of the one being progressive, the other not. The author ought to have admitted that philosophy *is* progressive on his own hypothesis; for by his own showing it has gradually evolved the true principles of human knowledge. The fact which is so much dwelt upon, that the same questions come over and over again, and are ever unsolved, is nothing to the purpose. In all sciences, even those of a purely positive character, the great ultimate points aimed at are stated in the outset; but the circumstance of their not being solved is no argument to prove that progress is not made in them. Physiology aims at the discovery of the principle of life; chemistry of the ultimate elements of nature; politics at the *best possible* form of government. These problems recur ever and anon; they are ever solving and never solved; but truth comes out in the very process.

So it is in philosophy. The great ultimate problems have been stated, and re-stated, and never solved; but let the progress of human intelligence, the marking out of the boundaries of human knowledge, the whole intellectual phenomena of man's history, say, whether there has not been a steady advancement towards the elucidation of the great questions of man's nature and destiny. Indeed, the argument from the fixed nature of metaphysical ideas, may be viewed as tending exactly the contrary way from what is here intended. What does the perpetual advance of positive science prove, but its errors or imperfections? What does the fixedness of metaphysical ideas prove, but their absolute and necessary truth? For our own part, we believe fully and heartily in philosophy; we regard it as the truest expression of the thoughts of every age; as one of the greatest aids to human progress; and, when of a true, elevated, and spiritual kind, as one of the most efficient means by which man is ever recalled from his absorption in the material, to the contemplation of truth, of immortality, and of God.

We might just mention, before concluding this part of the section, that there have been many pleasing, though by no means profound writers, who have from time to time grounded upon these sensational principles, valuable works of a practical kind, adapted more especially to guide us aright in estimating the influence of circumstances over the human mind. As a specimen of these, I might mention Dr Henry M'Cormac's volume entitled

“The Philosophy of Human Nature in its Physical, Intellectual, and Moral relations.” We find here the same theory of causation assumed, that we have already noticed; the same dogma respecting the origin of our ideas, the same fundamental principle respecting the nature of the moral faculty as arising from experience and association, all asserted, and reasoned upon, with only the very feeblest attempt at analysing and proving them. Notwithstanding this, however, the work is practically a useful one for general readers, and points out many facts in the constitution of man, which it is highly beneficial for us both to observe and act upon.

As a whole, then, we might say that this school of philosophy has borne much good fruit in its own peculiar department; for although it is by no means adapted to cultivate the deeper religious feelings, or to raise the mind to enthusiasm in the pursuit either of the beautiful or the good, yet it is well calculated to point out the mental action and reaction of mind and matter, of the man, and the outward world, upon each other, and thus to advance that species of education which consists in so adapting our circumstances, as to aid us in our intellectual advancement, and in the performance of our moral duties. All the varied systems we shall bring under review, are, in fact, but pulsations of the great mind of humanity. They are all based upon some true idea, and each takes up some one department, which, owing to the concentration of mind upon it thus produced, is analysed far more

completely than could otherwise have been the case. The defect which one system labours under is soon supplied by the exertions of another, and the next age reaps the fruit, which they have both conspired to produce and to mature. We come now to consider the class of philosophers which we have termed

(B) SENSATIONAL MORALISTS.

Although ethics do not, generally speaking, afford so much scope for speculative philosophy as those branches of mental analysis, to which we have just referred, yet it would occasion a considerable blank in our historical survey, were we to pass by the attempts which have been made to philosophise on man's moral and practical life. That moral systems should be founded upon sensational principles is, perhaps, less to be wondered at, than that such principles should be employed in explaining the more complex phenomena of our intellectual being. Our *actions* are external, and refer for the most part to some or other of our outward circumstances ; hence, probably, arises the great tendency there is, to make the whole science of ethics turn upon outward laws or relationships, rather than upon any of our inward feelings or conceptions, to make it a system of rules, rather than the acting out of an absolute idea. On this account, we consider it a matter of great importance, to show how our moral sentiments spring from that true and incontrovertible source, which exists in the primary elements of our constitution.

In studying moral philosophy *speculatively*, there are two different methods in which we may commence and carry on our investigations. *First*, we may begin by the study of *actions*, analysing their qualities, and attempting to discover what it is which gives them the peculiarity, that we designate by the word *moral*; or, *secondly*, we may begin by studying our inward emotions, and endeavour from thence to detect the precise nature and ground of the moral feelings. In the one case we seek to answer the question, What is virtue? in the other, What is conscience? The former of these processes we may term the objective, the latter the subjective method; and we shall have ere long to point out two distinct schools of sensational moralists, which have followed respectively each of these two methods in their philosophical speculations.

The influence of sensational principles upon both methods is at once obvious. First, consider their bearing upon the discussion, which has taken place, respecting the qualities of actions. One philosopher affirms, that by the exercise of his higher or rational faculty, he perceives in action certain moral distinctions, which are quite separate from any immediate tendency they may have to produce pleasure or pain; while another contends that we possess a moral sense, which distinguishes ethical properties in actions, just as the natural senses distinguish material properties in objects. To the sensationalist, however, both these theories are totally inadmissible. As to our reason, he would argue, it can do nothing more

than work up the matter which experience affords, and therefore, can discover no qualities distinct from those which come to us through the channels of sensation ; and as to the moral sense, it cannot be generically different from natural sense or sensation, but, like all other emotions, is merely a particular form in which the latter is found to exist. Actions, therefore, morally speaking, can have only one set of qualities when viewed by the light of sensationalism, namely, those, by virtue of which we receive profit or loss, pleasure or pain, joy or sorrow.

Again, if we look to the subjective side of the question, it is equally evident, that, in studying the *moral faculty*, sensationalism at once puts its veto upon any theory, that implies the spontaneous action of the human mind ; that it makes every impulse come from without ; and that when carried to its legitimate conclusion, it merges human liberty entirely in an iron fate, consequent upon the supremacy of external circumstances. We shall now, therefore, briefly trace the influence of sensational principles upon these two phases of ethical philosophy, as exhibited in our own country during the present century.

I. We begin with the *objective sensational ethics* of the present age, the great inquiry of which is, into the nature and grounds of *virtue* externally considered. Locke, it is well known, in his zeal to oppose the doctrine of innate ideas, denied the existence of any original or innate practical princi-

ples, by which human action is governed ; a conclusion against which Lord Shaftesbury and others very warmly protested. Notwithstanding this protest, Dr Thomas Rutherford, following out the moral aspect of Locke's philosophy, soon worked it up into a defence of utilitarianism. With this view of the ground of moral relations David Hume coincided, and also, among English writers, Abraham Tucker, an especial admirer and follower of Locke. To these writers succeeded Archdeacon Paley, who published his work on Moral Philosophy<sup>1</sup> in the year 1785—a work which from that period to the present has held the most distinguished place in *one* of the English universities at least, and has been extensively read and admired throughout the country. The utilitarian scheme of Paley, then, we may consider as the ethical phase of Locke's philosophy, which has principally occupied the public attention during the nineteenth century.

Paley's definition of virtue is well known to every moralist. He makes it "the doing good to mankind in obedience to the will of God for the sake of eternal happiness."<sup>2</sup> The will of God then is here stated as the most direct *rule* of morality which we possess. To find the *ground* of it we have only to ask what is the ground of that will? The ground of it, argues Paley, can be no other than the production of happiness to the creature, since we can-

<sup>1</sup> "Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy." Dedicated to Edmund Law, D.D., Bishop of Carlisle.

<sup>2</sup> Book I. chap. vii., paragraph the first.



not conceive of God operating otherwise than benevolently.<sup>1</sup> We may consider, therefore, the utility of an action to be the ultimate foundation of its moral excellence, and the test by which we know it to be in consonance with the Divine purpose.<sup>2</sup> This mode of stating the matter, as it appears to us, virtually begs the whole question. The possible motives of the Divine operation are all summed up in a single disjunctive syllogism—God must act malignantly, benevolently, or indifferently; but he cannot act malignantly or indifferently, therefore he must act benevolently. Undoubtedly, God ever acts benevolently; but does this syllogism exhaust the possible motives of the Divine operation? Far from it. There is yet room for us to imagine an infinite number of grounds in the depths of the Divine nature, from which the operations of Deity may originate. Why might we not as well argue, that God must operate according to right, or according to wrong, or indifferently to both—but he cannot act wrongly or indifferently; consequently he must according to *right*, and *that* must be to us the ground of virtue. These kind of arguments, in fact, bring us no nearer to the real analysis of the subject in hand; they beg the question in the very terms employed.

Without making any further specific remarks, however, upon Paley, we shall proceed to offer a few observations upon utilitarianism itself, as an ethical system.

<sup>1</sup> Book II. chap. v.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. chap. vi.

1. We affirm that utility could never be practically applied, as a safe and sufficient *rule* of human action. For on the supposition that our actions are to be estimated and directed by their expediency, who, we ask, is to estimate or direct them? The consequences of every action we perform, are either wholly or to a great extent unknown to us; they go on multiplying by the laws of our moral and intellectual nature far beyond the possibility of human sagacity to calculate; so that if we had to value each action according to this rule, it would be impossible ever to know, with any approach to certainty, how much virtue or how much vice it really contained, how far it was morally right or how far morally wrong. Paley, though a utilitarian, saw clearly that utility would not serve as a *rule* of conduct, and took refuge from its uncertainty in the will of God. However acutely, therefore, it might be argued that utility is the *ground* of morality, and imparts to all actions the peculiar qualities which we attach to them as good or evil, still it is quite clear that we need some safer principle by which our practical life may be directed. Unless such a principle be afforded us, we may commit the greatest errors in morality, while our intentions may have been perfectly sound and healthy.

To this argument it is by no means sufficient to answer, that utility is not to be estimated by the sagacity of any individual mind, but rather by the combined and general result of human experience, from which the rule of life will be an induction; for

this general experience is not applicable to the vast majority of individual actions at all, and if it were so, is still far too fluctuating to serve for an absolute and imperative law. If men were to act on their own ideas of utility, we should have an infinity of moral laws, varying with their relative sagacity or folly; if they were to act on the general idea of utility, then we should find moral distinctions varying in every country, and with every different state of society. Utility, then, cannot be the universal *rule* of moral action; we go on further to show that it can neither be the *ground* of it. To show this, we affirm,

2. That the argument drawn from the fact, that utility in the case of inanimate or involuntary agents never produces in us the slightest degree of moral approbation, has never, as far as we are aware, been fully and satisfactorily answered. If utility were the whole foundation of moral distinctions, assuredly we ought to denominate everything virtuous which is in any way beneficial. On the contrary, the very fact that the notion of intelligence and will are to be *subjoined* before we can possibly regard utility as synonymous with morality, is a proof that something else is needed, ere we can account for the whole of what is contained in the notion of virtue. The argumentation may be briefly put as follows. If an agent is accounted virtuous simply because he subserves the general well-being, then a valuable machine, which confers great blessings upon society, is virtuous. By no means, replies

the utilitarian ; a machine is not an intelligent or a voluntary being at all, and hence stands altogether without the limits of moral agency. On your own showing then, we rejoin, there must be something or other in an action besides its mere utility, something implied in the idea of free agency and intelligence which gives it its moral character ; and it is *that something* which we contend for as an element that altogether destroys the system of mere expediency, which we are now considering.

3. This will be more clearly seen, when we consider that moral distinctions, if we trace them to their origin, do not apply directly to actions at all, but only to their motives. Our moral estimate of every action, purposed by a sound mind, is regulated entirely by the view we take of the *intention* from which it springs. Many an act which is really useful is stamped by us as immoral, the very moment we perceive that the *design* of it was *evil* ; and many an act fraught with mischief and calamity is not only passed by uncensured, but is even applauded as virtuous, so soon as we distinctly perceive that it was done with a good intention. On the very same principle, one and the same action is often regarded as moral to-day, and immoral to-morrow ; not because we have discovered in the meantime any difference in its *tendency*, but because we have fresh light thrown upon the motive from which it sprang.

Observe, then, how the moral aspect of an action must be judged of, on the principle, that its excel-

lence or turpitude arises out of the motive it springs from. If we define a *motive* to be that, which immediately precedes and leads to effort, it is evident, that it cannot be anything external, but must consist in a particular state of feeling or emotion, since it is from this alone that action or effort can directly flow. A *moral* motive, accordingly, in opposition to an instinctive one, will be a state of feeling, which includes in it intelligence and design, since we always carefully exclude from the appellation of virtuous, those acts which result from our purely instinctive or pathological affections. To estimate, then, the true morality of an action, instead of first looking to its direct tendency, respecting which we may be altogether deceived, we must follow it up to the motive from which it originated ; this motive we must ascertain to be a state of feeling not pathological merely, but involving intelligence and design ; and, lastly, we must perceive that the *design* itself is in accordance with our nature and destiny as accountable creatures. If this be an accurate analysis, the foundation-stone of morals is the great ruling law of our nature, by virtue of which we are impelled to the accomplishment of our destiny ; which law, moreover, is but an expression both of the will and the nature of God. Upon everything which God has created around us, a law is visibly impressed, by which it has to fulfil its design ; our law is that engraven upon the conscience, and embodied in the dictates of our moral nature. Here we have at once a sure ground of morality, and a

valid rule by which to direct all our practical life. Such an account of our actions, morally considered, it is needless to say, is quite incompatible with the doctrine of utility; not but that the great moral law may ultimately coincide with what is expedient, but still, as far as man is concerned, the law itself, as an expression of the Divine will and the Divine nature, must be regarded as the foundation of virtue; expediency can only be used at the very furthest as the test of it.

4. The most decisive ground of appeal, however, on all questions of this nature, is that of the human consciousness. Fundamental truths of our spiritual being cannot be *proved*; they must ultimately rest upon the natural history of the human mind, observed and investigated on the principle of all inductive philosophy. Is there, then, or is there not, in the human mind, an intuitive perception of duty or propriety, distinct from any calculations of profit and loss? Is there, or is there not, a feeling of approbation in the consciousness of having complied with duty, quite irrespective of the benefit which may accrue to ourselves or to any one else; and is there, or is there not, a feeling of self-condemnation or remorse when duty has been set at nought, although no injury may have been inflicted? We answer, there is no language of civilised men, in which the most unequivocal terms expressive of such facts of our moral nature are not found in abundance, and none in which they do not stand quite distinct from the phraseology, by which men express their notions

of the injurious and the useful. To describe, in poetic language, the beauty of individual actions, which have all the marks of disinterested virtue about them, does not suit the closer and more severely philosophical style which it is our aim here to preserve; the whole *argument*, however, is contained in this one sentiment—that if we investigate the facts of our own consciousness, or examine the words and actions of mankind at large, as evidences of their inward perceptions and feelings, we shall discover a class of moral emotions, which are excited by the contemplation simply of *right motives*, and that too before the slightest judgment is passed upon the utility of the action, to which such motives gave birth.

Against this conclusion it is but idle speculation to inquire, whether a savage brought up in the woods and forests would manifest certain moral sensibilities at the sight of a detestable action.<sup>1</sup> It is no more possible to argue correctly respecting our moral faculties from such a case, than it is to argue correctly respecting man's intellectual powers from the most degraded of our species, or to conclude, that because the human frame does not manifest certain physical powers, when sickly and decrepid, that therefore it cannot possess them in ordinary circumstances favourable to its full development. Paley, it is true, though employing fallacious arguments of this kind, yet gave a higher tone

<sup>1</sup> This is the method proposed by Paley, for testing the reality of a moral sense. See "Moral and Political Philosophy," Book I. chap. v.

to his moral system, than Hume had done before him, by presenting the nobler motives to virtue, which we derive from the hope of everlasting happiness; but still all the objections we have pointed out, we cannot but think, are opposed to the doctrine of utility as a *principle*, whether we take it in its wider or more contracted extent.

From the foregoing remarks, then, we conclude that utility can never give an unerring *rule* for the guidance of human actions; that it passes by all consideration of right or wrong *motives* in the estimate of human conduct; that it takes no account whatever of our moral *dispositions*; that it fails to explain the facts of our *consciousness*; and is consequently wholly insufficient as a theory to satisfy the phenomena of our moral life.

But we come now to notice another form, which the utilitarian principle has taken, and in which it has excited no little attention in our own country, as well as on the Continent of Europe,—I refer to the philosophy of Bentham. Jeremy Bentham was born in London, in the year 1748, and at a very early age became a graduate of the university of Oxford. Whilst there he directed his attention to the study of law and the cognate branch of ethics, and during the last year of his stay in that city became an ardent admirer and investigator of the principle of utility, chiefly from reading the Essay of Dr Priestley upon Government. In 1776 he published a “Fragment on Government,” and in 1789 appeared his grand work, entitled, “Intro-



duction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation.” The moral system which Bentham advocated in this latter work, and which he expanded more and more during a long and laborious life, at length came forth in the year 1834, in its most complete and at the same time most popular form, as a posthumous production, edited by Dr Bowring, under the name of “Deontology.”

The account of Bentham’s proceedings in the development of his principles is given by his editor in the following terms,—“It was in the year 1789 that the ‘Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation’ appeared. Here, for the first time, are pains and pleasures separately defined, and regularly grouped; and the classification and definition of them is so complete for all ordinary purposes of moral and legislative investigation, that Mr Bentham, in after life, found little to modify or to add to in the list. By the side of the pains and the pleasures, the corresponding motives are brought to view, and a clear and determinate idea attached to the springs of action by showing their separate operation. And, moreover, the author uncovers and sifts that phraseology which has done so much mischief in the field of right and wrong by the judgment of *motives*, instead of the judgment of conduct, so that the same motive is frequently spoken of in terms opposed to and incompatible with one another. \* \* \* In the later years, however, of Mr Bentham’s life, he was far from deeming his analysis complete. He had not taken

man's interests and man's desires into his list, and he employed the phraseology of utility instead of that of happiness."<sup>1</sup>

In the year 1810, it appears, Bentham published his "Chrestomathia," the object of which was to show in what manner all the various arts and sciences contribute to the production of human happiness. In 1817 appeared "The Table of the Springs of Action," in which the phraseology of utilitarianism is still retained, although the author was evidently working his moral system into a more close and definite form. Becoming now, however, dissatisfied with the term utility, as expressive of the groundwork of morality, he cast about for an expression which should convey his notion on the subject without the possibility of creating error or equivocation. Once he thought of proposing the term eudaimonology, again he employed the word felicitism, until at length, in the year 1822, in his "Codification Proposal," he decided on terming his moral theory "the greatest-happiness principle," and to represent the practice of virtue as the art of maximising happiness. It is the complete exposition of this principle in its last and most approved phraseology, that forms the object of the work called "Deontology," to which we have just alluded.<sup>2</sup>

The principles advocated under the name of

<sup>1</sup> "Deontology," Vol. i. p. 311.

<sup>2</sup> See Dr Bowring's History of the greatest-happiness principle, appended to the first volume of the "Deontology."

Deontology may be easily explained. The whole system takes its rise from the consideration, that man is capable of pleasures and pains, and that, from the calculation of these, all moral action proceeds. On this theory, good is a word synonymous with pleasure, evil synonymous with pain, and all happiness consists in the possession of the one, and the absence of the other. Give me, says the utilitarian teacher, give me the human sensibilities—joy and grief, pain and pleasure, and I will create a moral world.<sup>1</sup> Pleasure and pain, then, the basis of our moral nature, are to be estimated according to their magnitude and extent; *magnitude*, referring to their intensity and duration; *extent*, depending on the number of persons who are affected by them. It is in the proper balancing of these, asserts Bentham, that all morality consists, and beyond this the words virtue and vice are emptiness and folly.<sup>2</sup>

Pleasure or pain, however, may arise from two sources; it may arise from considerations affecting ourselves, or it may arise from the contemplation of *others*, the former being purely of a selfish nature, the latter being sympathetic.<sup>3</sup> Hence originates a twofold division of virtue into prudence and effective benevolence—both of them, however, alike having their ground in the pleasure we personally derive from their exercise. Prudence, again, is of

<sup>1</sup> Deontology, chap. i. and ii., in which the basis of the principle is explained, in a most amusing and caustic style.

<sup>2</sup> For an equally amusing history of the word "Virtue," consult chap. x.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. ii. Introduction.

two kinds, that which respects ourselves, which our author terms self-regarding prudence; and that which respects others, which he terms extra-regarding prudence. Effective benevolence, also, is twofold, positive and negative; the business of the former being to augment pleasure by voluntary exertion, that of the latter being to do the same by *abstaining* from action.<sup>1</sup> Virtue, says Bentham, when separated from the pursuit of happiness, is absolutely nothing; and, accordingly, it is termed by him a fictitious entity.<sup>2</sup> Inasmuch, also, as no one is supposed to have any motive for action different from the pursuit of pleasure or the avoidance of pain, we have the deontological doctrine educed, that every motive is abstractedly good, and that evil has to do with nothing but our actions or dispositions. In a word, we are to imagine, that man has originally no moral sentiment whatever, that he has no idea of one thing being right and another wrong, that all actions are to him in this respect absolutely alike, and that the conception of virtue, as well as the rules of morality, are all the product of experience, teaching us what actions produce happiness, and what suffering. Such is the moral system, which is aptly enough termed the greatest-happiness principle, and such the virtue which is correctly expressed as the art of maximising our enjoyment.

<sup>1</sup> These results comprise the whole scope of the second volume of the "Deontology."

<sup>2</sup> Vol. i. chap. x.

The style of the work from which I have made the above analysis is popular, witty, and somewhat amusing, but becomes at length tedious from repetition and tautology. It abounds in biting sarcasm against what is termed the dogmatism and "*ipse-dixitism*" of most other moralists; but, what is remarkable, is itself at the same time one of the most striking instances of reiterated *assertion* that is to be found among all the ethical writings of the present century.<sup>1</sup>

Now, in offering some remarks upon Bentham's philosophy, we must state distinctly, that we leave entirely out of the question his valuable labours in the department of jurisprudence, and refer simply to the principles of his moral theory. And here we would caution every ethical student against imagining, that he will find all the originality, which is claimed for the deontologist by himself and his more ardent admirers. To speak of Bentham's "having found out the true psychological law of our nature, as Newton discovered that of the material universe," is not only metaphysically false, but, even allowing its philosophical accuracy, is *historically* untrue. To say nothing of the Epicureans of ancient times, and more recently of Hobbes, we might point out many writers, who have given far more than passing allusions to the very same doctrine as that for which Bentham is so highly extolled, although they may not have expanded it so fully, or applied it so ex-

<sup>1</sup> Bentham's most scientific work was his "Introduction to Morals and Legislation."

tensively, as was done in the case before us.<sup>1</sup> The professed supporters of utility, again, such as Hume and Paley, proceeded virtually upon the very same principle ; and even if we pass over these, yet still we might refer to Gay's preface to Archbishop King "On the Origin of Evil," to the writings of Priestley, to the "Political Justice" of Godwin, and to many of the French moralists, for illustrations of the very same theory, which Bentham only somewhat more perseveringly elaborated. The greatest-happiness principle is, in fact, utilitarianism in one of its many different phases ; and accordingly the objections, which we have already urged against that doctrine, apply with equal force to the one now before us. As the question, however, is of some importance, we shall specify a few other objections, which apply more directly to the utilitarian system, as held by the advocates of deontology ; and,

1. There is in these writers a perpetual habit of confounding the *cause* of virtuous action with the *effect*. We have it reiterated again and again as an unanswerable argument, that there must be a selfish pleasure experienced whenever we act on virtuous principles: for, if our action terminates in ourselves, it must arise from the prospect of our own happiness and advantage ; if, on the other hand, we act for the

<sup>1</sup> The only difference between Epicurus or Hobbes on the one side, and Bentham on the other, is, that the former drew their principles at once from human nature metaphysically considered—while the latter gave no theory of man generally, but laid down his moral axioms as ultimate facts.

welfare of others, still, we are told, it is only for the satisfaction of our own impulses that we seek to benefit them. Now, that there is pleasure attached to moral action, whether it be self-seeking or extra-seeking, we readily admit, but this is far from giving us a proof that such action *springs from any anticipation of the pleasure we hope to obtain*. It is a pleasure to a strong man to exercise his limbs, but this is no evidence that he cannot have any other motive than this for exercising them. To a man devoted to business it is a pleasure to be perpetually absorbed in it, but still his activity may have many other grounds of excitement beside that one. Prove as you may, that pleasure actually accompanies, and even that we *expect* it to accompany the practice of every virtue, the point is still far from being settled that there is no other spring of virtuous action in existence. The Deity, assuredly, may have given us a moral law, may have engraved it on our own minds, and placed it far beyond all the chances of human calculation; and yet may have attached pleasure to the obedience of it as a mark of his approval, and as a reward for our fidelity. The mere fact, therefore, that we always look for happiness to accompany virtuous action, does not at all prove that happiness is the ground of its moral excellence. This is confirmed when we consider,

2. That, upon investigating the moral phenomena of our minds, we find a class of affections, which rise in their real worth just in proportion to their *disinterestedness*. If personal pleasure were

the ground of virtue, then every affection ought to be esteemed higher in the scale of morality, in proportion as it tends more directly to *self* as its object. Just the contrary is the case. The more our own individual interests are sacrificed in the pursuit of another's welfare, the higher rises the scale of virtue from which such conduct proceeds. If it be said that we sacrifice our own interests, because the pleasure of satisfying our benevolent feelings more than counterbalances the loss we sustain ; we reply, that this only exhibits the vast strength of our purely disinterested affections, and affords no proof that, because they give us pleasure in their exercise, therefore they must be selfish in their origin. Only show in one single instance, that the direct end of an action is for the sake of another to the sacrifice of ourselves, and the fact that we have a moral satisfaction in its performance, does not in the slightest degree shake its purely unselfish character.

3. We appeal to the evidence of our higher reason, as a testimony against this peculiar form of utilitarian morality. If virtue be a mere calculation of consequences, there can be no such thing as *moral philosophy*, strictly so called. The very idea of *philosophy*, or *science*, implies the existence of absolute or unalterable truth, not only that which is, but that which *must* be. Mathematical science investigates the unalterable relations of space and number ; metaphysical science, the unalterable foundations of truth in general. What, we ask, can moral science investigate, unless it be



the unalterable facts and principles of morality, both in themselves and in their relation to us.

That there are certain *fixed* relations between man's moral sensibilities and outward actions, is a fact resting upon the evidence of our consciousness; and it is to these eternal relations that we direct our inquiries, when we seek to lay the groundwork of a moral philosophy. Very different, however, is our employment when we are merely engaged in calculating for our future happiness, with pleasures and pains as our ciphers. What is a pleasure to one man is often a pain to another; that which offers to me satisfaction, presents, perhaps, a prospect of nought but misery to you; so that, moral relations on this principle must be as uncertain and variable as are the temperaments or idiosyncrasies of individual minds. There need to be on the deontological system a separate moral scale for every man; nay, we ought all to revise our own moral principles every year or two, to see whether that which was a pleasure to us some time ago may not now have become an object of dissatisfaction: whether, therefore, that which was virtue has not now become vice. Our reason, we contend, in opposition to this, forces us to form certain primary and fundamental moral judgments, just as much as it necessitates the existence of our primary beliefs with regard to the external world, or to the fact of an exertion of power in the production of every effect, or to the axioms which lie at the foundation of all mathematical reasoning.

It is just as impossible for me practically to deny the obligation of justice, as it is to deny that the world exists, or that a whole is greater than a part. The one as well as the other rests upon the primary and undeniable facts of our own unchangeable consciousness,—facts which, though they may be disputed in theory, can never be denied in practice. That a philosophical dreamer may run his head against the wall on the score of his idealism, we do not dispute; nor do we doubt, but that in the case of moral obliquity, where the consequences of the folly are not so immediate, men may be found to reject the fundamental axioms of moral obligation; but in the healthy understandings of the mass of mankind, the one judgment is just as plainly developed as the other. Moral philosophy then, *as philosophy*, is annihilated, when once we admit the theory before us; the whole question is taken out of the region of scientific truth, and reduced simply to the calculations of individual sagacity.

4. There is a secret *petitio principii* at the very foundation of all utilitarian reasoning, like that of Bentham. Every man, it is affirmed, *ought* to seek the greatest happiness of the greatest number, as the fundamental principle of his actions in the world. But, why *ought* he to do so? On what ground can it be shown, that I am bound to seek the welfare of myself or my fellow-creatures, if there is no such thing as moral obligation? If it *pleases* me more to inflict misery upon mankind, why am I not just

as virtuous an agent in doing so, as if I please myself by producing their happiness? The greatest-happiness principle itself must, in fact, rest upon the pedestal of moral obligation, otherwise there is no means of enforcing it as the true principle of action, either in our social or our political relations. Take away that firm resting-place which is afforded by the notion of duty, and expressed in the word *ought*, and we may sink from one position down to another, without ever reaching a solid basis on which we may plant our feet, and lay the first stone of a moral superstructure. That this is really the case, is half acknowledged by the followers of Bentham, who are now visibly shrinking from the extreme view he has taken of utilitarianism, and seeking to *include* the idea of moral approbation, in order to give their doctrine some degree of strength and consistency.

5. Into the political consequences of this system we shall not allow ourselves to enter at any length : one thing, however, there is, of which we would remind those who hold up the excellence of Bentham's political writings, as a proof of the soundness of his ethical system ; we mean, the fact that Hobbes, with a logic equally, if not more severe, deduced from the very same fundamental principles the propriety of all government being grounded on absolute despotism, as the form best suited to the wants of human nature. That Bentham was so successful on the subject of jurisprudence, arose, we consider, from his giving up the strict view of

the selfish system with which he started, and following the dictates of common sense and of a benevolence, which were more consonant with his own disposition, than they were with his moral theory.

Moreover, there is a fundamental distinction between the principles of legislation and those of private morality, which should never be lost sight of. The former principles *suppose* the existence of the latter, and must proceed in strict accordance with them, whether it appear a matter of policy to do so or not. The object of the jurist is, simply to make men with their moral feelings as they are, already fixed and determined, and so to direct their actions, as to bring about the greatest welfare of the community. Morality says, “*Fiat justitia ruat cælum;*” jurisprudence points out *in what way* justice is to be done, so as to tend to the happiness of the whole nation. The one gives the absolute rule of action, the other only directs the details for social purposes. Moral law is immediately from God; political law, though springing from moral principles, is an adaptation of man;—the one is a code written upon the tablet of the human heart; the other, a code written in the statute book of the empire, conformable, indeed, to moral law, but compiled for social utility. To morality, as a science, the utilitarian ground is entirely destructive, altering its universal and necessary aspect; in politics, utility, directed by moral precept, must be a chief element in every enactment. Bentham, looking at

the subject with the eye of a jurist, by degrees became blind to everything but the utilitarian element—an error which, while only partially dangerous in legislation, is to the moralist fatal and deceptive from the very first step.

That Bentham was a great man, a courageous man, and in many respects a benevolent man, we believe all must be ready to admit ; still, we cannot but think, that he neither read enough to disabuse his mind of many a cherished notion, which a wider range of investigation would have exploded, nor ever cultivated enough that steady reflective habit of mind which evolves truth from the observation of our inward consciousness, and reduces, by a close analysis, the admitted facts of human nature to their primary origin. With unexampled patience he developed the influence of pleasure and pain upon human actions ; but a deeper philosophy would have pointed out, that these are but the accompaniments of virtue, while the law and the imperative to its obedience come from a surer and a far more exalted source. That source once discovered, he must soon have felt how threadbare a view of man's moral constitution his favourite greatest-happiness principle presents, how many of the noblest motives for virtue are entirely left out, and how much holier is the meaning attached to the word *duty*, than to merit the coarse and unphilosophical ridicule which he thought fit to pour out upon it.

I cannot better sum up these remarks on Bentham's "Deontology," than by adopting the lan-

guage of an intelligent reviewer, who remarks—  
“What we maintain with regard to deontology is, that with dogmatic exclusiveness it endeavours to supersede every other view of virtue but its own, and even the high principle of duty itself. That in the estimates it presents of happiness and of virtue it takes no notice, and virtually excludes some of the most influential causes of happiness, and the highest objects of moral excellence: that in itself it tends to fix the mind on the lowest principles of action, and presents nothing to raise it towards the highest: that it is inconsistent in its principles, representations, and conclusions, with the established laws of human nature: that its statements are so little adjusted by moral wisdom, that they may often afford apparent justification for degrading vice: and that by bringing the highest rules of duty to the test of a standard, with which they have little relation, their comprehensiveness and their dignity is lessened, and their direction limited and perverted. Were the deontology generally made the exclusive guide of life, degradation and evil must be the result.”<sup>1</sup>

We have thus viewed the principal methods by which the objective question of moral philosophy (what is the ground of virtue?) has been answered by the adherents of the sensational school. The error we now see in each case, is that which lies at the foundation of all sensationalism, namely, the

<sup>1</sup> Christian Reformer, 1835.

tendency to look without, and derive all truth from experience, to the entire neglect both of our inner consciousness, and of those notions of absolute truth which are as certain as they are indestructible.<sup>1</sup>

II. We come now to the consideration of the *subjective sensational ethics* of the present century.

The problem which moral philosophy, *subjectively* considered, endeavours to solve, is the following:—What is the faculty by which we become cognisant of virtue and vice, and what other faculties contribute to the perfection of our moral nature? According as the primary moral sentiment of the human mind has been referred to a judgment, or to an inward feeling, the names of intellectual theorists, or of emotional theorists, have been respectively awarded to the two corresponding classes of speculators. The idea of a *moral sense*, that is, of a peculiar and original emotion, by which we are led to the exercise of moral approbation or disapprobation, is altogether rejected by sensationalism; since, in that case, there would be at least one subjective tendency in the human mind, which does not come from an empirical source. Equally incompatible, on the other hand, with sensational principles, is the theory of a *primitive moral judgment*, by which we discern right and wrong in actions, and form the distinct conceptions of good and evil. If, therefore, our moral sentiments arise neither from an implanted emotion or

<sup>1</sup> For an estimate of the Benthamites generally, see Sir James Mackintosh's "Dissertation."

inward sense, nor from a primary judgment of our intellectual nature, the only possibility that remains is, that they are factitious, that they arise gradually by the aid of experience and the laws of association, and that they depend, therefore, like the rest of our empirical knowledge, simply upon the information of the external senses for their origin. Sensationalism, then, advocates the intellectual theory of morals, only in this subordinate sense; virtuous action being a calculation grounded on the experience of pleasures and pains, of injury or utility. The arguments against this utilitarian view of the case we have already summed up, and need not, therefore, at present recount.

But now, in approaching the subjective side of moral philosophy, and attempting to explain the mental processes, upon which our moral life depends, there is a question of vast importance which meets us at the very outset, and that is the question of the liberty or necessity of the human will. According as this point is settled one way or the other, the whole succeeding inquiry will assume a very different aspect; in fact, the sensational theory of responsibility is almost entirely built upon the doctrine of necessity, as its foundation.

The point here to be considered, is *not* whether our actions are merely mechanical or otherwise; *not* whether or no we have the power to act according to the determination of our will; it is the prior question, whether the mind in exercising volition, can determine itself, or whether it is



*necessarily* determined by motives. That we are conscious of voluntary *action*, as flowing from a determination or choice, in contradistinction to the purely mechanical functions of the frame, it is scarcely necessary to assert; the only real question to be discussed is—How come we to our determinations? What is it that puts the mind into the state of volition, from which certain acts or courses of action follow?

Now, just in proportion as the fundamental idea of *self*, as finite cause, holds a prominent place in our philosophy, will there be a greater share assigned to it in the process, by which our volitions and dispositions are formed; on the contrary, the greater be the tendency to absorb this idea in that of finite nature or of the infinite, so much the less will be the influence ascribed to our own personal power in the direction of our actions, and the moulding of our character. Pure subjective idealism makes self, or the will, within its own limits, omnipotent. Pure objective idealism, on the other hand, like that of Spinoza, by absorbing the individual self in the infinite substance, necessitates *absolute* fatalism: and, thirdly, pure sensationalism, which makes man simply one form of organised matter, must, in like manner, end in a fatalism equally complete, because, on this hypothesis, we must be subject absolutely to material laws, and become exactly what the outward circumstances we are placed in render us. This last theory, therefore, we term *circumstantial fatalism*.

Modified systems of philosophy, again, will present different features of liberty or necessity, according as any one of these three elements, SELF, NATURE, or GOD, prevails over the other two ; those which refer most to God and to nature, upholding a modified, or, as it is termed, a *philosophical* idea of necessity ; and those which refer most to the native powers and energies of the mind, maintaining the ordinary doctrine of free-will. A philosophical necessity grounded on the idea of God's foreknowledge, has been supported by theologians of the Calvinistic school, more or less rigidly, throughout the whole of the present century. *Their* conclusions, however, have arisen more from dogmatic than from scientific considerations. On the other hand, philosophical necessity, grounded upon the influence of external nature, and the circumstances which surround us, has given a tone, and, more recently, a very decided one, to all the ethical writings of the sensational school.

We may comprehend the foregoing remarks in the following summary. Let *self*, *nature*, *Deity*, be three powers, the two former of course created, and allowed to exist by the last. If the power, self, is entirely uncontrolled, the result is pure subjective idealism. If it be entirely neutralised by Deity, the result is *religious* fatalism, if by nature it is *circumstantial* fatalism. Again, if self is only predominantly controlled, the result is philosophical necessity, whether the power opposed to it is that

of Deity or of nature; and, lastly, if it control itself, subject to the subordinate influences of the other two powers, the result is termed free-will. From these representations it will be evident, that sensationalism in philosophy tends to uphold the doctrine of necessity, which will, of course, advance nearer and nearer to circumstantial fatalism in proportion as the sensational principles become more sweeping.

In sketching the history of sensationalism during the last century, we showed in what manner Hartley and Priestley drew the doctrine of philosophical necessity from their peculiar psychological principles. We may now add, that it is in a direct line from these acute authors, that all the subjective sensational ethics, which are now to be described, have regularly and connectedly flowed, so that we may regard all the necessarianism of the present age as the natural offspring of a sensational psychology. One of the most celebrated works in which the moral philosophy of this school was developed, is the well known inquiry of Godwin concerning "Political Justice." Godwin might, indeed, have held in our sketch a place with Paley and Bentham, as the uncompromising advocate of utilitarianism; but his writings are equally celebrated for their defence of the doctrine of necessity, and the application of it both to private morality and political principles.

The publication of the "Political Justice" dates from the year 1793, and from that period down even to the present time, the moralists who have

arisen from the school of Hartley, Priestley, and primarily of Locke, have in almost every instance advocated necessarian principles, based upon an exaggerated statement of the influence of external circumstances. To enumerate the mere names of writers who, during the present century, have treated the various topics of moral philosophy upon this necessarian hypothesis (most of whom have drawn largely upon the works of Jonathan Edwards for their arguments,) would be both useless and tedious. The class, however, to which we allude are those, beginning chronologically with Belsham, who published his "Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind, and of Morality," in the year 1801, and coming down to Mr Bray's work on the "Philosophy of Necessity," which appeared in the year 1841.

In glancing at the principles of the ethico-sensational school, which fills up the interval between these two writers, I shall not confine myself to the statements of any particular authors, neither do I wish the reader to infer, that they all would admit the consequences which we may find to be included in their system. Most of them, indeed, so far from taking up the necessarian hypothesis, with a view of undermining the interests of true morality, have done so, as being, in their opinion, the only means of saving them. The advocates of free-will, it is known, on the contrary, have done the same; and as in such cases it is natural to suspect, that there is a portion of truth on both sides of the

question, we must attempt to ascertain the fundamental ideas upon which these writers proceed, and to find out the real point of discrepancy between them. The moral system of the sensational necessarians assumes for the most part the following aspect, which, for the sake of clearness, we shall concentrate into a few detached sentences.

Man is born without any moral principles, notions, or tendencies, whatever.<sup>1</sup>

He has the capacity, however, of feeling pleasure or pain, which arise either from his direct sensations, or from the satisfaction or non-satisfaction of his propensities.

That which produces pleasure is good, that which produces pain is evil.

Pleasure, when not actually enjoyed, but only in contemplation, is what we term *desire*, as pain in contemplation is *fear*, or aversion.

Desire, again, is synonymous with *will*; what we desire to possess is, all things considered, necessarily the object of our volition.

We cannot ourselves determine, what sensations shall give us pleasure, or the reverse; consequently our will with regard to the seeking or production of them cannot be free.

With regard to our ideas, associations, and habits, it entirely depends upon our education, which shall be objects of desire, and which shall not.

<sup>1</sup> Those of the class now under consideration, who adopt phrenology, take, of course, a different view of this point; but in other respects they generally coincide with what we here lay down.

Consequently, our desires, that is, our volitions, are absolutely and necessarily determined by *motives*, those motives arising either from our constitution or from our education.

As our actions follow our will, and the will follows the motives to which it is subjected, it is impossible that any man should act differently from what he really does under the same circumstances.

This is seen from the relation of cause and effect. Every volition must have a cause, and while the same causes exist the same effects must follow.

Moral causation is as sure and regular in its effects as physical.

On this alone is grounded the value and certainty of moral means, and from this alone results the real moral worth of every action ; since action, without motive, can have no moral quality about it. So far the necessarian.

Now, in opposition to these principles, the libertarian denies that volition and desire are one and the same thing, or that the doctrine of causation applies to the determinations of voluntary agents *in the same sense* as it does to everything else ; and he appeals to various facts of our nature in order to bear out this view. First of all, he appeals to *consciousness*, which, if it does not subject us to perpetual deception, assures us every moment of our existence, that we are not *absolutely* under the power of motives, that we can follow one course or another as we may choose, that we might have chosen differently in the past, and that we may voluntarily

mould our course for the future. Again, he appeals to the whole aspect of practical life, showing that it is all based upon the notion of man's being a free agent; that it is not by necessity, for instance, that we build houses, construct engines, carry on business, or do anything else of the same nature. And, finally, he appeals to man's moral sentiments, and argues, that although motives may be necessary to the goodness or badness of an action, yet if those motives are supreme, the moral quality is entirely taken away from the agent, who can only justly incur approbation or disapprobation when he follows either a good or bad motive with the most perfect freedom of volition. Such is the *popular* view of these famous antagonistic opinions.

Now, in estimating these two systems, let us see, first, what the necessarian means by his doctrine of moral causation; whether, in fact, he means any thing at all contradictory to the common notion of free agency. If all our volitions have an *objective* cause, (that is to say, a cause not a part of, or dependent upon, ourselves), which is certain and unalterable in its effects; then it is manifestly impossible to avoid the conclusion, that man is the subject of an *irresistible fate*. Every action, it is said, is the effect of a volition, but every volition is produced by a motive (or, in the language of necessity, a cause over which we have no control; the inevitable conclusion is, that man is as much a machine under the effect of motives, as a steam engine is under the impulse of its moving power. *This con-*

*clusion, too, be it observed, applies to man's whole practical life*; if it be true at all, it must be true respecting the whole province of human action, because every possible action is the result of some volition, and every possible volition the result of some motive. The reasoner, therefore, who argues, that every *moral* or *immoral* action which a man commits *is necessary*, because certain motives have acted irresistibly upon him from without, must accept the full conclusion, that everything else in human life takes place by a like constraint; that by a similar *necessity* an agent makes clothes, or mends shoes, or builds houses, lights fires, cooks provisions, and does everything else, that depends upon our so called voluntary activity. The fatalism here involved cannot be met by the plea, that the agent in question placed himself in the way of circumstances, which have led him to this or that particular mode of life; for if he did so, it was by means of a volition that he did it, and that volition was determined by a previous motive. Neither can it be met by the plea, that he was induced by some other agent to follow one course of action or another; for that agent, likewise, was the creature of fate. His will to prompt was determined by a like necessity; and the will previous to, and causative of that, was determined in the same manner; so that, beginning at any action of any voluntary agent, we may go back through a succession of causes, till we come to the great first cause, and thus evolve the idea that the whole of human actions are one chain of cause and



effect absolutely fixed and determined from eternity, to eternity.

Now, the philosophical necessarian, we know, shrinks from *practically* accepting that conclusion. He will not admit an absolute and fixed necessity, but only a moral or philosophical one. Besides, he speaks largely of education, and the importance of remedial means, and the benefit of cultivating the intellectual powers and the moral feelings: moreover, he exhorts his fellow men, on the very ground of his doctrine of moral causation, to get the sources of proper culture for themselves, and to put them into the hands of the people at large, as the only method of making them virtuous and happy. Astounding folly must all that be, if human things are not contingent; if they move in a chain of cause and effect from the eternity past to the eternity to come; and if all our actions are absolutely determined by what is entirely beyond our control. Exhortation and effort must be quite out of place if the whole sum and substance of human life is a necessary chain of this nature, for whatever we may *appear* to do of our own accord is, on this system, but the mockery of a liberty, which we seem to possess, but which practises upon us a complete and perpetual illusion. This extreme, then, we repeat, the philosophical necessarian avoids: he shrinks back from the abyss of fatalism, however strongly his principles may draw him to its brink.

If, then, the doctrine of necessity, thus modified by the term philosophical, does *not* mean that all

human life is machinery, that it is a series of fixed results which can never be altered, it must admit, in some form and to some extent or other, *that man is the master and regulator of his own mind, and has sufficient control over his dispositions and actions either to render himself improvable, or to make himself a subject of blame when the means of improvement are neglected.* Whether improvement originate in ourselves, or in the influence of another, still it originates in *man*, and equally shows him to be in some sense a *source of moral action.*

Now let us look for a moment at the libertarian hypothesis, and see wherein it differs from the foregoing. First and foremost, we find a certain power of self-determining volition asserted; that is, as its opponents correctly show, the power of choosing without preference, or a choice without choice. The advocates of this self-determining power, with all their zeal, can never show any decisive cases in which we choose without being induced by a motive; they are always obliged, for illustration, to have recourse to some altogether insignificant actions (such as choosing one out of fifty shillings), which cannot, in the nature of things, have any moral quality attached to them; while in all the important movements of our life, those by which our character is estimated, it is perfectly evident that we do and must act under the influence of certain motives. The libertarian, in fact, when pushed hard by his opponent, is always obliged to concede

the point, that motives not only have an influence upon us, but do really *determine* our choice in all the great practical affairs of human life, nay, that the existence of a motive is absolutely necessary to the moral quality of every action; so that we must, after all, admit that man does not act ordinarily free from motives, but in strict accordance with them.

Now let us see in what consists the discrepancy between these two antagonist doctrines, when shorn of their respective anomalies. The necessarian, if he mean anything by prefixing the word *philosophical* to his favourite dogma, admits that man is *in some sense* a free agent; that he forms plans, that he modifies character, that he acts upon design which he can carry out or suspend; in one word, that he is all that the libertarian would contend for, *except* that his volitions are ever determined by the strongest motives, instead of determining themselves. On the other hand, the libertarian, when pressed for his proof of the self-determining power, is at a loss to find any decisive actions, in which this power exercises itself in opposition to or irrespective of every kind of inducement. The only real point of dispute left, then, is this—how are we to reconcile that power of free and intelligent action, that capacity of design, that source of amelioration, or the reverse, which all admit to exist within ourselves, with the unquestionable fact, that we ever choose and must choose under the influence of the

strongest inducement? In other words, how is our *freedom* of choice consistent with the *necessity* of acting from a motive?

The whole of the difficulty we now see is traced up to the word *motive*, and therefore it is in the analysis of this term that we must look for illumination. What, then, is a motive? Strictly speaking, it is *that which immediately precedes our determination to act*. That which immediately leads to such a determination, however, must evidently be an *emotion*, for it is granted on all hands, that emotions are the only active or impulsive principles of our nature. A motive, therefore, in the proper sense of the term, can be nothing else than the *mind itself in a certain state of feeling*; and in this view of the case there can be little difficulty in admitting, that every volition is determined by means of a motive, inasmuch as this is only another expression for the palpable fact just stated, that the mind in a state of emotion is the immediate antecedent of all human action. Necessarians are perpetually arguing as though motives were *objective* realities, whereas nothing objective can possibly have the least power in exciting us to action, until it is subjectively combined with some kind of emotional feeling. Such emotional feeling alone it is, which acts as a moving power upon the will.

We see, therefore, at once, if this be true, in what manner man, though under the necessity of acting in accordance with motives, is yet perfectly *free*. He cannot, it is true, alter the relation which God

has instituted between emotions and volitions *generally*, inasmuch as that would be to alter the very laws of our constitution, but there are a thousand ways by which he modifies his own *states of feeling*, and through them, of course, his volitions also. The relation between emotion and volition stands on the same footing as that which exists between our perception of premises and our inferring from them a logical conclusion. It is entirely beyond our power to refuse a logical conclusion, while we have a conviction of the truth of the given premises, nor can our belief be possibly *modified*, so long as the data remain to us unchanged; but we can easily reconsider those data, and then, according as we find them confirmed or shaken, we frequently strengthen or subvert our belief in the conclusion. Just so, in the other case, while the motive remains, the volition must necessarily follow; but that motive, we must remember, is a state of mind, which we can control by a thousand different methods; and hence, if we can control the motive, *through it* we can control the volition as well. It is precisely the same fallacy in principle which leads one man to say, "That we can no more change our belief than we can change the colour of our skin," and another man to say, "That our volitions are absolutely fixed by circumstances beyond our control." Of course, we can never alter the relation between the perception of premise and conclusion, nor between internal motive and volition; but we can, as we every day do, throw fresh light upon premises in the one case,

and bring fresh inducements to bear upon our volitions in the other.

We might explain the fixed relation that exists between motive (in the sense just explained) and volition, by a reference to the mathematical idea attached to the word *function*. A sine, we say, is the function of an angle. There is a relation between them which can never be altered; and hence, so long as you have a particular angle in contemplation, the sine is *necessarily* determined. If you require a sine of a different magnitude, the only possible way of obtaining it is by taking an angle of a different magnitude; the one varying with the other, because the relation between them is abiding. In like manner it is impossible to alter the relation between our motives and our volitions, the one following *necessarily* from the other; but notwithstanding this, we have a spontaneous power over our motives (*i. e.* our emotional states,) by the exercise of which we can either reverse or modify our volitions almost to any extent we choose. *Volition is a function of the mind*, and by whatever means we can influence the mind as a whole, we have by those very means a power over the determinations of the will. All this is indeed tacitly granted and implied by the necessarian, when he exhorts his fellow men to the cultivation of his intellectual and moral feelings.

But to all this argumentation, I am aware, the necessarian opponent might now urge in reply, that the very fact of our influencing our own mental states

by the presentation of fresh motives and inducements to the mind, must itself depend upon a volition, which volition is determined by a previous motive, and so on, *ad infinitum*. It must be remembered, however, that *motive* here means a *mental state*, and that our mental states do not *solely* depend upon external circumstances, over which we have no control, but also upon our own spontaneity. If this spontaneity be denied as a part of our constitution, and man be made wholly dependent upon externals, then we must appeal to psychology, for in the psychology we start with, the whole question is cradled.

The argument of the necessarian—that every volition must be determined by a previous volition, and so on to infinity, will only hold good on the psychological principle, that *will* and *desire* are the same thing, both equally expressing a *passive* state into which we are placed by the strongest inducement. The psychology, which maintains this theory, starts from sensation, and from it derives all the phenomena of the human mind. The mind itself in its view is passive; it is a bare receptacle of impressions and feelings, a sheet of blank paper; and every volition, therefore, must on this theory have its cause or circumstances out of ourselves. This psychology, however, we disown; we regard it as altogether untenable; disproved, and exploded, by the strictest inductive analysis of the facts of our consciousness.

A close analysis of these facts enables us to detect

three classes of phenomena in the human mind ; those, namely, of *intelligence*, of *feeling*, of *will*—a classification to which all modern science is tending. Intelligence creates conceptions, laws, rules of action ; sensibility supplies inducements and impulses ; will creates effort, activity, the emission of voluntary power. Between the faculty as cause and the product as effect, there is no intermediate step. It is no more requisite to ask, *why* will produces effort and choice, than to ask, why intelligence gives rise to ideas, or sensibility to impulses ? The supposition that voluntary effort and choice can spring causatively from an inducement or external motive, is the old error of sensationalism invading the theory of the will, that, namely, of substituting the *occasion* for the *producing* cause. The understanding and the feelings both present inducements to the will ; and because the will follows some or other of them, it is supposed to be *necessarily* determined ; but this is a false conclusion. These inducements are but the *occasions* of our volition ; the power which produces them is that original spontaneity, that independent source of action which we term *the Will* or *the Me*, and which can react upon all the arguments of reason and all the impulses of emotion. The will, as an abiding fact in our constitution, contributes a large element to the formation of every motive, and when the motives are presented, it gives the whole *nisus*, by which volition or choice is effected.

Whenever or wherever power is put forth, there



must be not only an *occasion*, but also an effort or a spontaneous movement as its *cause*. Hence all power originates in *mind*—the only spontaneous principle, and that either the mind of God or the mind of man ; and the very same argument which pretends to prove that man is not free, because he chooses from reasons or inducements, would also prove that God is not free, because he never acts without a plan. If we once give up the idea of spontaneity, as the spring of effort or choice, and account for that effort by the inducement alone, nothing can save us from the admission of an enormous and iron fatalism, to which God and man are alike subjected.

We allow, then, that volitions must necessarily follow from motives ; that there is in fact a fixed relation between them ; but those motives are subjective states of mind, such as dispositions, affections, passions, &c., which our intellectual and active nature are adapted by their very constitution to develop, or to restrain. When, therefore, the necessarian enunciates the great truth, that no man could have acted differently from what he did under the given motives, all that he really expresses, if he be not a fatalist, is the commonplace and most obvious fact, that emotions are the active principles of our nature, and that we always act in accordance with their impulse. If he denies that we have any control over these inward motives, then all his exhortations to the cultivation of the intellect and the feelings are nought but folly, and there is no refuge

but in complete circumstantial fatalism. *We affirm, then, that in principle there are only two possible hypotheses respecting liberty and necessity; the one is fatalism, the other is free-will, in the sense in which we have employed it.*

There is one thing, which we freely grant to be fixed and necessary on every hypothesis, namely, the *relation* existing between our emotions and our volitions; and the philosophical necessarian, keeping his eye upon that point, has enstamped all volition as constrained, because it is always excited by a uniform and definite law of our nature: but as well might he call our *actions* constrained also, because they *necessarily* follow whenever the volition dictates and impels. When we see an action (unless it be a purely mechanical one), we know that it arises from a volition: and in the same way, when we observe, or are conscious of a volition, we know that it arises from an emotion as its real proximate exciting cause; but behind both these lies the solid basis of human liberty, grounded upon that intelligence and native activity, which are the indestructible attributes of all moral and responsible creatures.

Self and nature, as we have already seen, are both of them powers, which act and react upon each other. Some men, unquestionably, are more under the influence of external things than others, while some, on the contrary, have what we term a *strong will*; that is, they possess a great capacity and habit of acting from fixed design rather than from short-sighted and more impulsive motives; but in

either case, the real course pursued is the resultant of those two forces. Men who look most to the outward force, will form an exaggerated idea of its magnitude, and incline to the sensational form of philosophical necessity ; while men who turn their thoughts most within, perceive the will operating so decisively upon external things, that at length they imagine it to be well-nigh or entirely supreme. The sensationalist, accordingly, will ever tend to the doctrine of necessity, since the idea of nature occupies the largest share in his philosophy ; the idealist will just as naturally tend to that of free will, since the notion of self, in this case, becomes far the more predominant. A mere glance at the history of philosophy will show that in nine cases out of ten the sensationalist and the necessarian, and the idealist and the libertarian, have respectively coincided with each other. We look upon both these classes of philosophers, however, so long as in their view of human nature they fall short of complete fatalism on the one hand, and subjective idealism on the other, as being generically advocates of the very same principles of voluntary action ; the only difference lies in the relative share of influence which is assigned to self and not-self in the formation of our character and our dispositions.

The truth of the matter may be stated in a very few words. Mind is essentially an active principle ; but, without reason, its activity would be blind and aimless, following the impulses which flow in upon it from without. In proportion as reason becomes

stronger, more vast, and more commanding, just in that proportion shall we find it regulating and directing our emotions. But our emotions are the real motives which excite volition, and volition impels to action ; so that it is in the possession of reason that we discover the great regulating principle, by which our natural activity is either restrained or directed, and by which we are enabled both to sketch out the designs of our life, and to pursue them in spite of all the obstacles which may stand in our path.

The error, then, in the necessarian school, which we have now been considering, is that of exaggerating the influence of circumstances and depressing the notion of *mind*, as an independent principle of action. In proportion as this is the case, the idea of responsibility becomes weaker ; crime is regarded rather as a disease ; praise and blame as more nearly synonymous with felicitation and pity ; and man becomes a link in one great chain of events, by which the purposes of Providence will at length be unfolded. Some of the authors of this school go much farther in adopting such conclusions than others ; and more commonly than not, the shallowest thinkers carry out their principle to the furthest extent. If such writers as the author of "The Philosophy of Necessity," instead of assuming a tone of almost amusing defiance against far deeper thinkers than themselves, and holding up their favourite doctrine to view, as a remedy for all the ills of humanity, would only analyse more

closely the subjects on which they write, and in place of making new discoveries in moral science, attempt to comprehend the old ; we should hear no more about the doctrine of necessity as a *practical* principle in morality, than we hear of it in connexion with the motives, which induce men to plough their fields, to pave their streets, or to carry on their merchandise.

The whole of the utility of such ethical treatises, if there be any in them, is derived from their setting forth one very plain precept, "Mould your circumstances, or else they will mould you:" the bane of them is, that men easily abuse the results and, under the plea of necessity, break loose from all idea of moral obligation.

Before we close our sketch of this controversy, we must just allude to the extreme form in which the necessarian principle has appeared under the title of "Socialism." This is the most extreme development of philosophical necessity which the present age has known, and cannot, therefore, be altogether passed over ; although the very dogmatical and unscientific character in which it has been enunciated, almost deprives it of any title to the name of philosophy. In making a few observations on this system, we shall not enter into a deduction of its consequences, or the thousand and one anomalies which it really contains ; these have been shown in several different forms, some argumentative and some declamatory, by many controversial writers. Our business is simply with the

*philosophy* on which the system is grounded, in estimating which we must go to the axioms which are placed at the head. Let us look, then, at the "fundamental facts" upon which the whole super-structure rests.

We are told, first, "That man is a compound being, whose character is formed of his constitution or organisation at birth, and of the effects of external circumstances upon it from birth to death ; such original organisation and external influences continually acting and reacting each upon the other." Now, if this fact means merely to assert that the whole of the influences which form a man's character consist of the powers and faculties which he has naturally, and the circumstances which lead to their development ; that is, in other words, of his subjective self, and of objective reality acting upon it ; then it simply amounts to a truism of about the same description, as that a whole is equal to its parts. What in the nature of things can there be in the case, beyond the subjective and the objective, and their mutual relation to each other? To make this theory of any use, the necessarian must show *that spontaneity is no part of our original constitution*. Or, if it mean to assert, *secondly*, that man consists merely of a *bodily* organisation at birth, which is moulded by the influence of external things afterwards, then it coolly begs the whole question of materialism, sets down the Hartleian psychology as undeniable, and reasons from them both as if axiomatically true. In a word, if

it mean that, because man has a certain mental constitution given him, and is afterwards exposed to circumstances beyond his control, *therefore* he is entirely the subject of necessity, it takes for granted all along the very point it intends to prove, namely, that *in his primary constitution* there is no provision made for his free agency. This first law, therefore, we regard as absolutely futile, for either it says nothing at all, or it takes everything that is intended to flow from it for granted; and in either case it is so equivocal in its meaning, as to be totally unfit for a primary fact, that is supposed to be something incapable of misapprehension.

The second of these fundamental facts is as follows:—"That man is compelled by his original constitution to receive his feelings and his convictions independently of his will." Now, here the same error is committed in its full extent, to which I have before alluded—I mean, the error of supposing, that, because our belief follows from certain data, and our volitions flow from certain emotions, in either case *by a uniform law of our nature*, therefore both belief and volition are entirely beyond our control. Of course, if I have two legitimate premises of a syllogism given, I am necessitated to draw the conclusion they contain; but this is far from proving, that I have no power to subvert my belief in that conclusion by other means. To call the perception of sequence in an argument, as Mr Owen does, an instinct, is nought but a total perversion of language; and as to its bearing upon the

doctrine of necessity, properly so called, it illustrates nothing whatever beyond the regularity of this law of our mental constitution. Just on the same principle, is it equally fallacious to infer, that our volitions are constrained, because they come and go through the operation of certain laws relating to our active powers. The mental affections from which our volitions arise, we must remember, are placed under the control of our reason and will, and to call them instincts, as though they operated *blindly*, in the same manner as do the impulses of animals, is an entire misapprehension of the whole philosophy of our active powers.

Try for an instant how phraseology of this nature (substituting the word instinct for conviction, belief, and disposition) would sound in ordinary life. I have an *instinct* that such a road leads to the village A, but I go and explore the country, and finding myself wrong, I have now another instinct, that I must go thither by a different road. My instincts, it is pleaded, are absolutely necessary, and therefore, under the former one, I could not but take the wrong road, however much it might have cost me or injured another to do so. What reply would such an excuse justly call forth? Fool that you were, why didn't you inquire the way? For what purpose was intelligence and activity given you, but to direct your course, whether it be in small matters or large? In like manner, what would be thought of a man who pleaded his *instinct*, when he robbed or cheated or beat his fellow-crea-



ture? Call such propensities diseases, if you will; they are diseases such as every sane man has the means of guarding against, from the fact of his possessing intellectual powers, moral perceptions, and voluntary activity; diseases, therefore, for which he is personally responsible, in proportion to his light, both to God and man.<sup>1</sup>

Against the appeal which Mr Owen makes to our consciousness, whether evil emotions do not rise within us, not subject to the control of the will, we make the contrary appeal, whether our susceptibility of these emotions is not to be repressed by the guidance of our reason and by the voice of our conscience. The education of our moral susceptibilities is analogous to the formation of a mechanical power of body; as the facility, for example, of performance on a musical instrument. Such facility is not the effort of *one* volition, but the gradual effect of a number often repeated under the direction of our reason. So likewise the moulding of our affections, emotions, and desires, though it is not the result of a single exertion of the will, is effectually accomplished by a series of volitions, all adapted to that end by an active and overruling intelligence. I take up a new instrument, and find I cannot, by any direct volition, perform upon it; but do I therefore conclude that performance is not attain-

<sup>1</sup> The demagogues who excuse crime by the plea of our actions and dispositions being necessary, seldom consider that on their principles, the oppression and punishments of which they complain are necessary too. The fatalist is very illogical in being a grumbler.

able by volition at all? So, also, I resist a desire or propensity, and find that my volition is not strong enough at once to give me the power over it, which I require; but the conclusion which some draw that such propensities cannot be influenced by volition at all, is equally unsound, as would be that to which I have just alluded. The fallacy of arguing that because certain affections cannot be commanded by a single volition, therefore they cannot, by any number whatever, is that known in logic under the name of "fallacia compositionis," and in this case is very easily solved by an appeal to the facts of everyday life.

There is yet another absurdity couched under the loose language of this second "fact," and that is the declaration, that man, by his original constitution, is compelled to receive his feelings and convictions *independently* of his will, whereas, in fact, the will is a part of that original constitution which compels him, and has its share with the rest of the faculties in the whole process by which the mind is enlightened and the feelings expanded. This second fact, indeed, when analysed, has just about the same nonentity of meaning in it as the other, while the proof of it is based upon an unpardonable abuse of the ordinary language, by which we are accustomed to express our ideas upon metaphysical subjects.

The third fact is no better, namely, "That our feelings or convictions, or both of them united, *create* the motive to action called the will, which stimulates him to act, and decides his actions."

To speak of feelings or convictions *creating* the will, is simply an absurdity. The will is another name for that real but mysterious power of mind, which, in a moment, can, at its bidding, emit an energy, that leads us to voluntary action or endurance. Feeling and convictions could never *create* this power, although it is quite true that they may influence the movements of it. This being premised, the fallacious conclusion intended to be drawn from such a representation, becomes manifest. The argument implied in it is this. Our feelings and convictions *create* the will, therefore the will which is a creation of their own cannot possibly have had any previous influence upon them. But how does the case really stand? The will is a mighty energy of a nature quite its own, which restrains or impels the whole man at its behest; created, moreover, not by feelings and convictions, but by the Author itself of the human mind. Our feelings and convictions act upon this power, and set it in motion; but then it at once reacts upon them, and, guided by intelligence, moulds them to a vast extent at its pleasure. Take a separate volition, and it is quite true that this is determined by some feeling or emotion of the mind; but we must be cautious not to confound an individual volition with *the will*, viewed as the abiding fact or principle of our spontaneity. A single volition is to the will, as a whole, what a single wave is to the ocean. Because the wind creates every wave which heaves upon the surface, is it therefore true that it created the ocean

itself? And so, because a feeling or a conviction may occasion a separate volition, is it, therefore, true that it originates the voluntary power of which this volition is but a movement? It is in the confounding of these that the source of the error we are exposing is to be found, an error which, in fact, vitiates the whole conclusion. It is not true that our feelings, or convictions, or both united, create the will, neither, if the word create be twisted so as to signify only so much as the word determine, does it follow, that because a single volition is determined by our feelings, therefore the will taken as a whole has no power to react upon them?

The fourth fundamental fact<sup>1</sup> is a remark perfectly true, but in any other system beside the one before us, would be regarded as perfectly useless, because it is always taken for granted. The fifth fact<sup>2</sup> is also based upon a true idea, but is stated in such a manner as to exaggerate greatly the influence of circumstances upon the human organisation. In fine, taken as a whole, it would be difficult to find any system of philosophy in an enlightened age, built upon a foundation so indefinite, so equi-

<sup>1</sup> The fact runs as follows :—

That the organisation of no two human beings is ever precisely similar at birth, nor can art subsequently form any two individuals from infancy to maturity to be precisely similar.

<sup>2</sup> The fifth fact is this :—

That, nevertheless, the constitution of every infant, except in case of organic disease, is capable of being formed into a very inferior or a very superior being, according to the qualities of the external circumstances allowed to influence that constitution from birth.

vocal, and so utterly incapable of sustaining a super-structure of any weight, or of any durability.<sup>1</sup>

The sentence in which the whole point of the system is acknowledged to be concentrated, is, "that the character of an individual is formed *for* him, and not *by* him." But in no sense whatever can this sentiment be true, except we regard it as expressing the obvious fact, that none of our faculties are self-created, and that, consequently, whatever mental energy we have, comes originally from an extraneous source ; that is, from the hands of the Creator himself. The mental constitution of a man is *himself*, as distinguished from every one else ; so that, to affirm that our characters necessarily arise from our original constitution, as acted on by external circumstances, and then to add that every one's character is formed independently of *himself*, is a palpable contradiction in terms. No doubt our minds themselves were formed *for* us by the infinite power from which they emanated ; but ever since their formation, they have had a great share in the development of our moral dispositions, a fact which Mr Owen unwittingly and unintentionally grants, when he speaks of the original constitution moulding the character.

The point, no doubt, which the doctrine of the new moral world intends to aim at is, that man is born a *passive creature* with certain susceptibilities ; that external circumstances acting on these suscep-

<sup>1</sup> To see the above system put in its philosophical form, consult „The New Moral World," parts i. and ii.

tibilities, of necessity give rise to our dispositions, and through them form our whole character. The view thus taken of human nature is, doubtless, such as might naturally enough be formed by a mind, that has slender reflective powers, a weak sense of the sacredness of moral distinctions, little reverence for religion, and which, in addition to this, has been accustomed to deal with that class of mankind, which exists rather as the appendages and the machinery of commercial life, than with those who are inured to habits of deep meditation or of moral refinement. The primitive judgments, the fundamental ideas, the original moral perceptions, and the sense of responsibility, which are among the very clearest phenomena to the reflective mind, are here all lost sight of, while man is reduced simply to an animal of somewhat higher instincts than the rest of the animated creation around him. This, we say, is the *meaning* of the system, but the attempt at stating these principles scientifically, and the aim at philosophising without any sound capacity for philosophy, have given rise to so much that is indistinct and paradoxical in language, that, were not the consequences inferred of a serious nature, the whole matter must be regarded as a nonentity, which were not worth the "pomp and ceremony of an argument." So long as Mr Owen, in common with the rest of the sensationalists, performs the real mission of this school of philosophy, by pointing out the importance of attending to the influence, which outward things exert upon the

mind and character, he is to be admired and applauded ; but when he drives his principles to an extreme, shaking the pillars of morals and religion, and involving all human things in one unalterable chain of fixed necessity, he presents another instance to be added to the many which have gone before, of the absurdities into which those men invariably fall, who devote their whole life to the expansion of one idea to the neglect of everything else.

In concluding these remarks upon the necessarian controversy, we shall take the opportunity which is here offered of making one or two observations towards elucidating the real ground of human liberty. The great stumbling-block against the admission of this fundamental truth, is the principle of causality. "Every phenomenon must have a cause ; volition is a phenomenon, and therefore must be caused ;" such is the position in which necessarianism intrenches itself. Now, for this argument to be good, it must be shown, that the principle of causality applies to voluntary agents *in the same sense* as it does to the material world, and that a phenomenon in the one case is under the same conditions as a phenomenon in the other.

It is here that the prime mistake originates. The very foundation of the difference between a being possessing a personality, and everything else around him is, that he holds an entirely different relation to the chain of causes and effects by which the phenomena of the material world are linked together. By a phenomenon in this latter sense, we

mean something which *begins* to exist, and then *terminates*. Suppose I make one ball strike another: the cause of motion in the second ball is the movement of the first; the cause of movement in the first is the impulse given to it by my arm; the cause of that impulse is the action of the nerves which convey energy from the brain; and the cause of this nervous action is *a volition*. Here the movements of the first and second ball, of the arm and the nerves, as well as the volition itself, are all phenomena, which *begin to exist*, and therefore must have in each case a *particular cause* adequate to the production of the effect, which effect accordingly must *necessarily* follow when the cause is at hand.

But now we have to ask (for this is the main point) *what is the cause or ground of the volition?* By what power is it called into being? It is not produced by an argument, or an inducement, or an objective motive of any kind: these might have given *occasion* to the volition, but none of them could really impart the mysterious power itself, by which mind sets the machinery of the body in motion, for the accomplishment of its purposes. The ground of the volition is only to be seen in the fact of my personality, in other words, in the fact, that I am the subject of a spontaneity of action entirely distinct from any quality resident in the material world. Admit that some inducement gave occasion to the volition; yet still the very fact of choosing that inducement out of the rest, implies an effort of will. Now this fact of personality, and



consequently, this phenomenon of liberty, is one of whose *beginning* we know nothing ; whose *cause*, independently of the great first cause of all things, we are totally unable to trace. It is an ever abiding reality, to which the term phenomenon is applied in quite a different sense from what it is to all other objects around us ; one, therefore, to which the principle of causality, in its proper sense, does not at all apply. If our spontaneity were to come and go, presenting a *succession* of phenomena, then we should look for a cause, by which each of the parts of this succession were severally produced ; but as it is one abiding fact of mind, which never varies, we can no more inquire for the *particular* cause of its spontaneous action beyond the will of the Creator, than we can for the particular cause of the great abiding fact of the universe itself. That very attribute of deity, which renders God himself a spontaneous source of action, was communicated by the Deity to man, when he made him intelligent, responsible, and free.

Instead, then, of arguing the doctrine of liberty, upon the arena of our separate volitions, which, as they come and go, are subject to the law of causality, we must remove the question one step further back to the idea of personality. Volitions are *not* free, but man is ; they are in each case determined, but *man* determines them ; they each arise and go as their cause impels, but that cause itself, which is grounded on the very notion of personality, is not a phenomenon, but an abiding fact of mind—*freedom*.

To test the justice of these conclusions we have

only to appeal to the facts of our consciousness. Do we mean the same thing when we speak of a cause and when we speak of a motive? Do we attach the same certainty and uniformity of sequence to the one as we do to the other? And if we feel on certain occasions a motive to be for the moment irresistible, are we not conscious of a higher power within, lying behind the impulse that urges us, by which the motive may be arrested and the spell of its influence finally broken? This power is no other than that of spontaneity, the attribute and distinctive feature of every being that possesses reason and personality.

Consider again the phenomena of intelligence, of design, of attention. Whence is it that we can form purposes; whence that we can judge between plans for execution; whence that we can make at any predetermined time a beginning; whence that we can stop in our course, and anon proceed; whence that we mould all the circumstances in which we may be placed, so as to tend to the accomplishment of our scheme? These voluntary actions, it is true, may spring from motives; but motives, we again repeat, are states of mind, in the production of which self, as an active principle, has as much, and often *more*, to do than any objective realities. All these facts point to a uniform and abiding cause, which does not take its stand among the passing phenomena of human things, but which is free and active in its very nature; open, indeed, to the influence of inducements, but not governed

by them ; cognisant of the power of motives, but having no cause and no beginning, except in God. To the argument, then, before stated, "Every volition must have a cause, and therefore is *not* free," we may reply, "Every volition has a voluntary cause, and therefore the man is free."

The question as to the possibility of free agency in the creature co-existing with omniscience in the Creator, we do not attempt to moot. The problem is really the same as the possibility of God's creating a responsible and intelligent being at all, a possibility, which we can only resolve into the fact of the Divine omnipotence. God willed to make man free, and accordingly he is free ; he willed to create him in his own image, and did not therefore pass by the most distinctive feature which that image presents.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I know not whether anything more satisfactory can be said on this point, than what has been said by Archbishop Whateley, namely, that on these high questions relating to Deity, we see only *parts* of great truths, and not enough to render them perfectly consistent to our understanding. Much confusion too would be prevented if the strictures he has given upon the ambiguity of the term, necessity, were kept in view. The effect of such a clearing up of terms is always to bring the matter in hand to its plainest statement, and show the real basis on which it rests. This, in fact, the Archbishop has done, by appealing on behalf of freedom to the moral consciousness of mankind. "If in saying all things are fixed and necessary, they [necessarians] mean that there is no such thing as voluntary action, we may appeal from the verbal quibbles, which alone afford a seeming support to such a doctrine, to *universal consciousness* ; which will authorise even those, who have never entered into such speculations as the foregoing, to decide on the falsity of the conclusion, though they are perplexed with the subtle fallacies of the argument."—Bampton Lecture, Appendix, p. 539.

The long discussion into which the doctrine of necessity has led us, has almost caused us to lose sight of the original problem with which we started, namely, to determine by what faculty it is, that we become cognisant of moral distinctions. The analysis, however, which we have given of human liberty, has gone far to settle this point also. Take any action of a voluntary agent, and ask—why is it a moral action? First of all, we must see that it is not a mere forced and instinctive movement, but that it really flows from volition. But, next, from what does the volition flow? Clearly, as we have seen, from a mental *emotion*; so that we must now look to this, as including in it the moral element. But, lastly, whence arises the emotion? Psychology shows us, that every emotion springs from some conception of our reason. In reason, therefore, we have the primitive and essential distinction of right and wrong, arising upon the contemplation of human actions; in emotion, we have the feeling of moral approbation and disapprobation excited by this conception; and then in the will we find the effort, which carries out the last impulse of the emotions into practical operation. If one of these three elements be wanting, the moral nature must be incomplete. First, we must have the conception of right and wrong, or moral intelligence would be wanting; next, we must have the feeling or impulse arising from it, or moral disposition would be wanting; and, lastly, we must have freedom to act upon right or wrong motives, or else responsibility

would be wanting. According to this, conscience or the moral nature must consist in the combination of reason, sensibility, and will, all acting together upon the fundamental conceptions of good and evil ; while the perversion of conscience must consist in dimming our moral ideas, in blunting our moral susceptibilities, and in weakening the power of the will over the whole man. How vastly this differs from the sensational view of our moral nature, which makes it consist in calculating for pleasure, it is needless to explain.

(C) SENSATIONAL PHYSIOLOGISTS.

The application of physiological investigations to mental science is, comparatively speaking, of recent date. A few crude speculations may be found amongst writers of an earlier period, respecting animal spirits and other "fictitious entities" of a similar nature ; but all of them about equally visionary and ungrounded. Hartley in our own country and Bonnet on the Continent, appear to have been the first who employed a sound and experimental knowledge of the human frame to discover the physical conditions of sensation or intelligence ; although in neither case did very marked success result from their efforts.<sup>1</sup> But within the last twenty years the science of physiology, both as applied to man and to the inferior animals, has expanded to so vast an

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps we ought to have mentioned Swedenborg, as one who in the eighteenth century grounded many psychological views upon his extensive researches in anatomy and physiology.

extent, and the multitude of the results it has unfolded is so great, that its bearing upon intellectual philosophy has now become evident. To offer any correct analysis of these results is not within the limits of our capacity ; nor, were this the case, would it comport with the plan we have set before us, of never leaving the track of speculative philosophy. Speculative philosophy, however, has been so far influenced and benefited by these investigations, that it seems imperative upon us to point out specifically, before we proceed further, what the most prominent of the advantages referred to really are. The main points, then, in which physiology has aided the investigations of the metaphysician, may be found, perhaps, included in the following particulars.

1. It has either done away with, or prevented the existence of many false theories, which are generally found very obstructive to the real progress of truth. The phantasms of Aristotle, the animal spirits of Descartes, the vibrations of Hartley, and all such speculations, are virtually moved out of the road by a closer examination of the *facts* of the case, and thus prevented from encumbering the movements of scientific research. In opposition to such notions it has been discovered, that the different kinds of nerves have specific qualities of their own, and that, instead of *conveying* impressions, they give rise to certain phenomena simply by the excitement of their own properties.

2. Physiology has marked out three great divi-

sions of the nervous system, showing the real distinction which exists between the sympathetic, the sensitive, and the motor nerves, and the actual difference there must accordingly be, between the proximate principle of organic life, of sensitive existence, and of voluntary action.<sup>1</sup> Whatever, therefore, the ultimate principle may be in which all these phenomena are supposed to unite, yet physiology assuredly puts us on a right track when it indicates, by means of such discoveries, the propriety of investigating the distinctive features, which these three classes of phenomena present.

3. Physiology throws, in this way, considerable light upon the emotions, more particularly of those which are purely pathological or instinctive. The nerves of the instinctive emotions have been clearly pointed out, and their centre localised in the ganglionic masses which lie at the base of the brain; thus showing, that as their organ is distinct from the cerebrum, there is every reason to conclude that these emotions also are distinct from and may operate independently of the intellectual functions, which are traced to the cerebral hemispheres. A comparison, moreover, of the brain of animals, which, for the most part, have great instinctive powers and little intelligence, throws considerable light upon this portion of our constitution.

4. The physiology of the brain presents many

<sup>1</sup> See a small tract on the "Connexion between Physiology and Intellectual Philosophy." By John Barlow. Also Carpenter's "Human Physiology," p. 229, third edition.

facts respecting the organic *conditions* of thought, which illustrate various minor points in the philosophy of the human mind. As a proof of this, we may refer to the investigations of phrenology. Without giving any prejudication respecting the truth or falsity of phrenology as a whole, yet it can hardly be denied, that its attempts at cerebral physiology have brought to light many facts respecting the action of different divisions of the brain in connexion with temperaments, dispositions, insanity, and mental manifestation generally, to which intellectual science is much indebted.

5. A still further advantage derived from physiology is the power it affords us of comparing the structure of the brain in different animals with their various habits, and of placing both by the side of the cerebral development and the mental manifestations observable in man. Although it will assuredly never be possible to give a whole analysis of the intellectual and emotional phenomena of the human mind, grounded upon the structure of the brain and the nervous system, yet there can be no doubt, but that many of the *peculiarities*, which are attached to those phenomena, can be accounted for and explained by an accurate knowledge of physical processes, and that much error is counteracted, when, instead of raising other theories to account for idiosyncrasies, we can refer them to their proper material causes.

In preventing then numerous errors, in giving verifications of certain general divisions of pheno-



mena, and in accounting for many otherwise perplexing facts in the pathology of the human mind, we conceive physiology has been of considerable use to the metaphysician, and may yet unfold additional materials to aid his investigations. At the same time, it is of great importance that the two sciences should each hold their proper limits, and that the one should not be allowed to assume the ground which peculiarly belongs to the other. To mark the boundaries of physiology and psychology we must simply inquire,—what are the phenomena which we learn by *consciousness*, and what those which we learn by outward *observation*? These two regions lie entirely without each other; so much so, that there is not a single fact known by consciousness which we could ever have learned by observation, and not a single fact known by observation of which we are ever conscious. A sensation, for example, is known simply by consciousness; the material conditions of it, as seen in the organ, and the nervous system, simply by observation. No one could ever *see* a sensation, or be *conscious* of the organic action; accordingly, the one fact belongs to psychology, the other to physiology. The acutest search of the physiologist entirely fails to discover anything at all analogous to a thought or an emotion, which are simply facts of consciousness; on the other hand, the functions of life, or the material affections of the brain, are phenomena of actual observation of which we are *never* conscious. These two orders of facts draw a broad

line of distinction between the two sciences in question; and it is only in those particular instances, where certain phenomena of observation are found uniformly to co-exist with certain phenomena of consciousness, that they can have any direct or serviceable bearing upon each other.<sup>1</sup>

Accordingly, the most eminent physiologists of our country, more especially those who manifest any considerable powers of philosophical thinking, as well as of outward observation, have admitted fully the importance of analysing the facts of consciousness *reflectively*; while they have been content with confining their own peculiar science to its natural limits. The researches of Dr Prichard, for example, upon the vital principle, clearly tend to show, that mind exists as a distinct entity; that its connexion with the nervous system is confined to a few simple operations; and that beyond these we must study mental science, if at all, solely by the aid of our inward consciousness. Professor Alison, again, who perhaps more than any other writer has combined the metaphysician with the physiologist, is evidently an adherent of the more modern school of Scotch philosophy, and would probably go

<sup>1</sup> On the distinction between the sphere of observation and consciousness, see Jouffroy's "Mélanges Philosophiques," Art. de la Psychologie. Also his preface to the translation of Dugald Stewart in the "Student's Cabinet Library of Useful Tracts," vol. vi. We may remark, however, that Jouffroy carries his views on this point too far. In the phenomena of muscular action, we have the uniting point of the two sciences, the link which indissolubly connects the science of mind with that of organic matter.

throughout, hand in hand with Brown, as a mental analyst. To these I may add the name of Dr W. B. Carpenter, whose works manifest some of the best qualities both of the thinker and the observer. Besides the opinions which may be discovered in his volume on "Human Physiology,"<sup>1</sup> it may be permitted me to add the following views on this question, which have been derived from a personal inquiry, made to him *as a physiologist*: namely, that peculiar and original mental qualities really exist; that these are quite distinct from any properties of a physiological character; that, when acted upon by their appropriate stimuli, they give rise to our various mental and moral manifestations; and that psychology is a science which must progress by an accurate induction of the phenomena of *mind*, as we see it around us in its different stages of development. All this tends to elucidate the fact we have before pointed out, that while physiology may cast a light in some particular points upon intellectual philosophy, yet the courses of the two run clear of each other, and that each must be investigated on its own grounds.

Whilst, however, some of the first physiological writers have thus wisely avoided the shoals of sensationalism, yet it cannot be denied, that the *exclusive* pursuit of physiology has a great tendency to withdraw the mind from following a reflective philosophy, and to lead it to indulge in what is merely experimental. Amongst those who have

<sup>1</sup> Hum. Phys. p. 366, *et seq.*

manifested this tendency, and attempted to investigate the facts of consciousness by the aid of outward observation rather than by inward reflection, we may distinguish two classes, viz., those who admit the independent existence of mind and those who do not; those whom we may, accordingly, designate as non-materialists and those belonging to the school of materialism. Our future remarks, then, upon the school of philosophers, whom we have included under the general term of *sensational physiologists*, will fall under these two heads.

We begin with the NON-MATERIALISTS. This term, it is right to premise, we employ in preference to the term *immaterialists*, because it not only includes those who actually oppose materialism, but likewise all those who, like many phrenologists, decline giving any answer to the question respecting the essence of mind; regarding it as a useless problem, for the solution of which we have not sufficient data.

Now, first, under this general and somewhat indefinite appellation of non-materialist, we may include a valuable class of authors, chiefly of the medical profession, who, without cultivating any remarkable powers of mental analysis, yet subject the *habits* and *instincts* of man, the various points of his mental constitution which depend upon outward observation, and the relative influences of body and mind, to a close and often a very instructive investigation. They look upon human nature sometimes with the eye of the physiologist, sometimes of

the natural historian; and, while from the habit of outward observation, the general tone of their philosophy flows most readily in the sensational channel, yet the results of their thoughts upon man in his various relations, are not only in themselves interesting, but often furnish materials, which more acute metaphysical analysts might employ to no small advantage in supporting a spiritual system. Amongst the works which have emanated from these sources, we shall content ourselves with simply mentioning the following, all of which have appeared comparatively within recent times:—Meryon's "Physical and Intellectual Constitution of Man;" Renon's "Delineations Physical, Intellectual, and Moral;" two interesting works written respectively by Drs Yarnold and Bushman, "On the Philosophy of Reason and Instinct;" Newnham, "On the Reciprocal Influence of Body and Mind," and two works of Dr Moore, "On the Power of the Soul over the Body," and "The Use of the Body in Relation to the Mind."

Almost the only professed physiologist of eminence, whom we could place here, is Sir C. Bell. That he is neither phrenologist nor materialist is sufficiently evident; and yet, when he affirms that "all our ideas originate in the brain, and are produced by the impression made on the extremities of the nerves," his philosophy appears of a strictly sensational character. To enter, however, into the miscellaneous philosophical opinions, which are to be found scattered throughout the pages of the

above-mentioned works, and others of a similar nature, is not our present intention. Did they form together a distinct school of philosophy, they would claim a larger space in its history; but having just assigned them the position they may be regarded as holding in the speculative philosophy of our country, we must recommend our readers, who would enter into the minor shades of their opinions, to procure the works themselves, promising them no little pleasure and profit in the perusal.

Leaving, then, the writers of these miscellaneous disquisitions, we come now to consider by far the most prominent of all the modern systems of intellectual science, which bear upon them a physiological character; I mean that which is known under the name of *Phrenology*. This system we rank under the head of non-materialism, inasmuch as its chief and most able advocates in this country have either expressly maintained the spirituality of mind, regarding the brain merely as the organ of its manifestation, or else have altogether interdicted the question of spiritualism and materialism as lying beyond the powers of human research. Some, it is true, affirm that phrenology *necessarily* involves the truth of materialism; but, without giving a judgment upon that point, we only remark, that our present business is with the actual facts of our national philosophical history, and that we must, therefore, regard such writers as those of the *Phrenological Journal*, not according to what it is

affirmed by some they ought to be, but according to what they actually are.

In estimating the truth and value of the phrenological system as a whole, there are two distinct questions which come before us. First, whether the physiological facts upon which it is all based are correct? And secondly, whether, if they be correct, they are of any use in giving us a basis, upon which the superstructure of an intellectual philosophy can be erected?

Under the first inquiry, we seek to determine such points as these—whether the brain is in any true sense the organ of the mind's development; whether separate portions of it subserve the manifestation of particular feelings or faculties; whether the assignment of those portions are correctly made in the phrenological map of the human skull; whether the power of mental exertion is in exact proportion to the size of the organ; and lastly, whether we can judge correctly of the inward cerebral formation from the cranium as viewed by us externally. The fundamental evidence for settling points of this nature must be sought in a thorough acquaintance with the physiology of the brain and nervous system; and, consequently, the first physiologists of the age are the direct source to which our primary appeal should be made. The result of this appeal is, that some eminent physiologists appear to be the advocates of phrenology, while many others of the highest class, so far from giving in their adherence to it, have stated some very strong

objections, which, as far as we know, have never been *fully* answered.<sup>1</sup> To determine the truth or falsehood of these objections, lies entirely in the hands of future physiological investigators; but so

<sup>1</sup> The following extract is from Dr Carpenter's "Human Physiology," in which the real difficulties of the case are very clearly stated:—"A fundamental doubt hangs over every determination of function, which results from a comparison of the size of the supposed organ or region in different cases. If it be true, that the grey matter only is the source of power, and that the white is merely a conductor, we have no right to assume that the total size of the organ affords a measure of its power, until it has been shown that the thickness of the cortical substance can be judged by the size of the brain, or of any part of it. Certainly there is a considerable variation in this respect among different individuals, and it is yet to be proved that the relation is constant in different parts of the same individual brain. Until this is substantiated, all inferences drawn from correspondence between the prominence of a certain part of the brain, and the intensity of a particular function, are invalid; that is, if the general doctrine of the relative functions of grey and white matter be true. Further, there is, unfortunately, a considerable uncertainty attending all phrenological observations, which are made upon the cranium rather than upon the brain; this we have seen from the discrepancy between the statements of Gall, and the facts ascertained respecting the comparative weight of the cerebellum in castrated and entire horses. It appears to the author, too, that comparative anatomy and psychology are very far from supporting the system, when their evidence is fairly weighed. It is a very curious circumstance, that the difference in the antero-posterior diameter, between the brain of man and that of the lower mammalia, principally arises from the shortness of the posterior lobes in the latter, these being seldom long enough to cover the cerebellum. Yet it is in these posterior lobes that the animal propensities are regarded by phrenologists as having their seat. On the other hand, the anterior lobes in which the intellectual faculties are considered as residing, bear in many animals a much larger proportion to the whole bulk of the brain, than they do in man. Again, comparative anatomy and experiment alike sanction the conclusion, that the purely instinctive propensities have not their seat in the cerebrum. These examples, and many similar ones, that might easily be added,



long as the highest authorities are disagreed, it is folly to dogmatise upon the matter, as though it treated of nought but ascertained fact in the natural history of man.<sup>1</sup>

collectively show the uncertainty, to say the least, of the inferences that are by many regarded as firmly established.

"The evidence of pathology, again, tends to show that particular disorders of function may result from lesions of any part of the cerebral hemispheres; this has been especially noticed, for example, in regard to the loss of the memory of words, which phrenologists locate in the organ of language; there, of course, the lesion might be expected on their system to present itself; but this is by no means constantly or even generally the case. Phrenologists lay great stress on the effects of local injury in causing loss of memory of a particular subject; but this principle, if carried out to its full extent, would require us to regard each organ as split up into a large number of subdivisions; the organ of language, for example, having one storehouse for Latin, another for Greek, &c., either of which may be destroyed without the other being affected. A very important source of evidence is that afforded by the correspondence between the several kinds of monomania, and the forms of the brains of the persons exhibiting them; and the number of those who, having studied this question, have given in their adhesion to the phrenological system, is one of the most weighty evidences of its containing much truth. The doubts which have been expressed on the subject would have much less weight if the coincidence of phrenological determinations of character with truth were more constant. The fairest tests of these are to be found, as Dr Holland has justly remarked, not in vague and ill defined moral propensities, but in a few simple and well-marked faculties, such as those of numerical calculation, language, or music, which have no others in actual opposition to them, and the degree of perfection in which can be clearly defined. We hear much from phrenologists as to their successful application of these tests, but we do not hear of the instances of failure. The author's own experience of their determinations, however, has certainly led him to the belief that failure is nearly as frequent as success."

<sup>1</sup> Since the publication of our first edition we are happy to "report progress" on the subject of cerebral physiology. Mr Noble's recent treatise on "The Brain and its Physiology," has called forth a re-

The real merit of phrenology is, that it has directed inquiry to the structure of the brain and the nervous system, and succeeded in drawing forth many interesting facts which otherwise would have been to this time enveloped in darkness. Had it been content with taking its place as one peculiar branch of human physiology, it would have appeared in a light perfectly unobjectionable to the most rigidly philosophical minds; but its ambition has, to a great extent, been its bane. To a certain degree, however, it must still be admitted, that phrenology in the physiological department has proved successful. It has elucidated the close connexion existing between the brain as a whole, and our mental manifestations; it has led to many experiments with reference to the effect of cerebral injury

consideration of the matter from Dr Carpenter, the results of which are stated partly in his third edition of the "Human Physiology," (in loco and appendix), and still more fully in Dr Forbes' "British and Foreign Medical Review." His principal points of objection against the phrenological system, *physiologically considered*, are these:—

1. That it does not cohere with the results of comparative anatomy.
2. That it is inconsistent with the facts of embryological development.
3. That it has entirely failed in educing the functions of the ganglionic masses at the base of the cerebrum, in which Dr C. is inclined to allocate *all the emotions*.
4. That it does not appropriate *all* the cerebral surface.
5. That there are insuperable obstacles against the possibility of determining the form of the cerebrum from observations on the cranium.

Regarding the functions of the *cerebellum*, we think that Dr C. has completely shaken the phrenological doctrine. Even Dr Prideaux (whom we regret to find writing so intemperately in the *Zoist*, and thereby somewhat betraying his discomfiture) is obliged to assign some new functions to this portion of the encephalon. Anew, therefore, we commit the subject to the zeal of our physiologists, hoping we may soon have to *report progress* again.

or distortion upon the intellect and the feelings; it has educed many highly curious facts as to the organic processes connected with the development of the emotions, the intellectual faculties, and the propensities; it has, in a word, thrown a light upon our knowledge generally of the functions of the encephalon, which did not exist before, and so far has conferred a benefit upon the science of man which it were uncandid not to acknowledge. *But with these its physiological researches, as it appears to us, the whole of its advantages terminate.*

To verify this opinion, we must come to the consideration of the other question we have stated, whether the physiological facts, allowing them to be correct, can serve as basis for a new system of intellectual philosophy? Here we regard phrenology as a total failure—a failure, moreover, which might have been predicted in the outset with unerring certainty, by any reflective and philosophical mind. The reason, on which this conclusion is founded, are of the following description:—

1. We should argue it from the very nature of the case. A system of intellectual philosophy must contain an analysis and classification both of our faculties, and feelings; it must give a complete enumeration of the elements of human knowledge; and it must trace them all to their real origin. The idea that all this can be accomplished by physiological observations, however valid and indubitable, can only arise from a total misunderstanding of the whole question. I will suppose for a mo-

ment, that we knew nothing whatever *reflectively* of our own mental operations; that the study of the human mind had not yet been commenced; that none of its phenomena had been classified; and that we were to *begin* our investigation of them upon the phrenological system, some notion of which had been previously communicated to us: we might in this case proceed with our operations with the greatest ardour, and examine skull after skull for a century; but this would not give us the least notion of any peculiar mental faculty, or aid us in the smallest degree in classifying mental phenomena. We could never know that the organs of the reasoning powers were in the front, and those of the moral feelings upon the top of the head, unless we had first made those powers and feelings *independently* the objects of our examination. The whole march of phrenology goes upon the supposition, that there is a system of intellectual philosophy already in the mind, and its whole aim is to show, where the seat, materially speaking, of the faculties we have *already* observed, really is to be found. Either our various powers and susceptibilities are *known* and *classified* before we begin any outward observations, or they are not. If they are already known and classified, then phrenology has nothing to do with the discovery; if they are not, then assuredly we can never find them out by mere external observation upon the skull; we can never turn them up to view by the scalpel of the anatomist, nor find them impressed upon the out-

ward form of the brain. If every organ had its name and nature inscribed upon it by the Creator, then we should have a system of psychology at once; but so long as this is not the case, we must observe and classify our mental phenomena by reflection, before we can begin to map out the locality in which they are to be found.

Strictly speaking, phrenology cannot reveal a single intellectual fact, which was not equally known before; it cannot trace any points of human knowledge to their primary elements; it cannot perform in any case a single analysis of our complex notions; in a word, it can do nothing, allowing its facts to be all true, but point out a certain connexion between two parallel series of mental and physical phenomena, the former of which have been already investigated.<sup>1</sup> If any one then should be inclined

<sup>1</sup> The Phrenological Journal admits that we must know our mental phenomena *reflectively* before we can allocate them—but still persists in calling cerebral observation a *method* of studying psychology. I confess myself unable to see what *psychological* truth it unfolds, that is not equally clear without it. Does it reveal a mental fact? Not one. These are all facts of *consciousness*. Does it give us a classification? No. "We must know (I quote the critic) from our consciousness the distinction between thoughts and feelings, before we can trace their connexion with particular parts of the brain." Does it define a single faculty or feeling—or give us any clue to the class of phenomena to which it should belong? No. The decision as to the class of phenomena to which any mental fact belongs, is left to the mind's reflective judgment, which would be quite unaltered wherever the organ of it might be found. We are willing to place the whole question of phrenology upon this one point. Let it be shown that it reveals a single fact of mind we knew not before—that it distinguishes between any two or more faculties, which we cannot distinguish by our consciousness—that any one could disown a mental pheno-

to urge, that the very circumstances of different feelings or faculties operating in connexion with certain portions of the brain, is a clue to a correct classification, it must be remembered that they are already classified as mental facts before any connexion with the brain can be predicated of them. Leaving, however, this fundamental objection, we go on to point out,

2. The extreme indefiniteness, which attaches itself to all *phrenological observation*. We are willing to allow, that the general divisions of the phrenological system are correct. The researches of Tiedemann, quite apart from phrenology, and of others who followed in his footsteps, have abundantly shown that there is a regular progression in the nerves and brain of all animated beings, from the most imperfect up to man himself. They have discovered, moreover, that the human brain, in its gradual formation, assumes obscurely at different periods all the various types which are found in the animal creation, and that, consequently, man's organic superiority consists of *superadditions* made upon that which the lower genera possess, and not in a total dissimilarity from them. This being admitted, the phrenological principle naturally follows,

menon, because he finds no cerebral organ for it, or could believe he has another unobserved, because he finds an organ unappropriated—let it be shown, in a word, that any classification of our consciousness can result from it, which had not before been made in the consciousness itself, and we will admit phrenology to be a valid psychology. Until then, however, we can see nothing in it but a branch of human physiology.

that we must regard those parts of the brain, which man possesses in common with animals, as the organs of the animal propensities, and those parts which he possesses over and above the mere animal, as the organs of our superior intelligence, and moral feelings. But admitting all this, what do we learn from it, *as far as intellectual philosophy goes*, beyond what was equally known before? We did not require any phrenological aid to convince us, that the animal passions, the moral feelings, and the intellect, present three different classes of phenomena, which cannot be perfectly resolved into each other; so that, in the main divisions of phrenology, at least, we have no fresh assistance given us in classifying purely psychological phenomena, but only in judging of the physical processes which stand in connexion with them.

But now, if we descend from the main divisions of phrenology to the details of the system (from which alone any new light could originate to aid our classification), here we find so much indefiniteness, that it is absolutely impossible to rely upon its indications as philosophically correct. When we attempt to classify the facts of our consciousness by reflection, we have no very great difficulty in forming a general outline of them. Sensation, perception, memory, judgment, as also the different passions, all possess certain indubitable marks by which they are distinguished from each other; but when we come to consider the various organs which phrenology assumes, we find such a complete com-

mingling of all the simple elements of our mental phenomena, as to render a close analysis of them impossible. Take, for example, such organs as concentrativeness or adhesiveness, and say what peculiarity they contain which can have an independent existence subjectively, or which may not be resolved into other elements. Patriotism—attachment to friends—concentration of mind upon an object—power of sustained attention, all are given as representing the functions of these peculiar lobes. Assuredly there does not appear to be much psychological light afforded by *such* an analysis. That I have a will, I admit; that my will governs all the faculties, and makes them *attend*, is also evident enough; but the force with which my will operates, is determined by a variety of circumstances. The duration or pertinacity of any mental exertion, must depend chiefly upon the *motives* we have for keeping our attention fixed upon the object before us. I may have, in fact, very large and very small concentrativeness at the same time, just according to the subject on which I am engaged, and the interest I feel in it; that is, just in proportion as my will is roused to effort. Take, again, the organ of philoprogenitiveness, and say why there should be a natural propensity and a particular lobe of brain, which excites love to a child, and none by which we are induced to love a parent, a brother, a wife, a friend, a sovereign, or anything else, with which we stand in close relation. Every one of these affections has an element of similarity, and an element



of diversity in it. In all, it is *love* ; but it is love modified by varying circumstances ; the analysis of which in each case, far from being aided, is greatly hindered by the phrenological hypothesis. Place together, again, comparison and ideality, both of which enter so largely into the poetical temperament, or consider the elements of mind which could lead us to manifest order or locality, and we find that, instead of advancing our analysis of mental phenomena, these different organs confuse us in every attempt we make to arrive at simple and primary elements. To attain a perfect psychology two things are requisite. 1. We must observe accurately the great mass of complex facts which the human mind presents ; and, 2. We must reduce them to their primitive elements, or original processes. The knowledge of our complex facts depends of course upon the *attention* we pay to our inward phenomena. Phrenology does not even pretend to give us any assistance here ; it is altogether an affair of consciousness. The main question is as to the *method*, by which the multiplicity of complex phenomena passing through the consciousness, is to be analysed and arranged. Now the only proper method to do this is to separate the *matter* of our mental processes from the *form*, to lay aside all consideration respecting the intensity of the action, or the diversity of object to which they may be directed, and to seize simply upon the *fundamental character* which they severally present. Here it is we see that phrenology has gone com-

pletely astray, that it has followed a method of classification altogether fallacious, and that it has given results totally worthless in a philosophical point of view. It has made its classification turn mainly upon the *objects* of our mental faculties, and almost entirely neglected their fundamental characteristics. On the one hand, it assigns different organs for the same faculty or feeling, because they apply to *different objects*; and then, on the other hand, it will turn a complex operation into a simple one, and appropriate to it a single organ, just because the whole process is directed to *one particular object*. Thus memory is distributed between three different organs, according as it applies to persons, to places, or to things; love, as a propensity, is divided into two or three more; judgment and imagination are mutilated in the same way. In brief, the form of our mental operations is utterly lost in the contemplation of their objects, and a classification results, which has all the bad qualities which can possibly attach to what is termed in logic, a cross division. But, reiterates the phrenologist, nobody can deny that these separate tendencies, such as love to wife, love to children, love to humanity, *really exist*, and that, therefore, they demand a separate allocation in our mental analysis. We reply, that love to a hundred other things really exists, and, by parity of reasoning, ought to have distinct organs. If once the principle be admitted, that we may overlook the form, and classify according to the matter or object of our feelings and faculties, confusion will

have no limit and no termination.<sup>1</sup> In no sense then whatever, as it appears to us, does phrenology assist in forming a correct classification of our faculties and susceptibilities; it rather throws obstacles in the way, by assuming a large number of irreducible elements, between many of which it is impossible to find any valid fundamental distinction, when due allowance has been made for the influence of habit and of circumstances.

Again, great indefiniteness attaches to phrenological observations, from the various influences that disturb the fundamental law, upon which the whole system proceeds, namely, "That the power of any mental feeling or faculty is measured directly by the size of the organ." Now, it is admitted on all hands, that education greatly alters the *power* of

<sup>1</sup> M. Tissot remarks on this point—"Without enlarging upon the determination, enumeration, and classification of the faculties as given by the phrenologists, it is clear at once, that those adopted by them are by no means intelligent; that they have, in fact, all the logical vices of which they are susceptible. Here they are redundant, there inadequate; here the consequence, however remote it be, is put upon a level with the principle; there the principle is forgotten, and the consequence announced; here again the consequence is detached from its principle, and there a little further on it is altogether rejected; breaking thus the whole analogy, both of the facts and ideas. If instead of confining our view to the nine propensities, we were to examine the twenty or thirty faculties which the phrenologists distinguish, what should we find then? We should make apparent in a thousand phases the utter chaos of this apparent arrangement, an arrangement more worthy of haphazard, than of serious reflection."—*Anthropologie*, vol. ii. p. 217. We recommend the phrenologist who is deeply in love with his *method*, to study M. Tissot's elaborate critique upon it.

our faculties without enlarging the organ, and consequently, it must throw a disturbing influence into the operation of the law above stated, which in a thousand instances will render it nugatory. Every one has some kind of education, and, consequently, it is certain that there will be some faculties in all, which will not show themselves in direct proportion to the size of their several organs. The same may be said with regard to the organs, which have a diseased action; in which case it is asserted by the phrenologists, that there may be prodigious power without any corresponding size in the development. This being admitted, it is clear that a peculiar quality or *state* of brain may give rise to power, as well as its size. It is almost proverbial, indeed, that stupid people have large heads; a peculiarity which, it must be granted, is often seen in connection with a slow phlegmatic temperament. Until we have some means, therefore, of knowing the *quality* of a man's brain, as well as the *quantity*, there is an insuperable obstacle against the correctness of any phrenological conclusions. Taking these things into account, we doubt whether the slightest aid could be ever afforded by phrenology in analysing our mental phenomena; nor do we believe that a classification, grounded upon the position of the organs, can be in any way so satisfactory, as one which is grounded upon an accurate observation of the phenomena themselves.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Appendix, Note B.